

QUEEN ELIZABETH

By KATHARINE ANTHONY

MCM XXIX NEW YORK

THE LITERARY GUILD

BY KATHARINE ANTHONY

MARGARET FULLER

(*1920*)

CATHERINE THE GREAT

(*1925*)

MEMOIRS OF
CATHERINE THE GREAT
(Translated and Edited by Katharine Anthony)

(*1927*)

QUEEN ELIZABETH

(*1929*)



QUEEN ELIZABETH (with the Spanish sieve). From the painting in the collection of Mr. G. A. Plimpton

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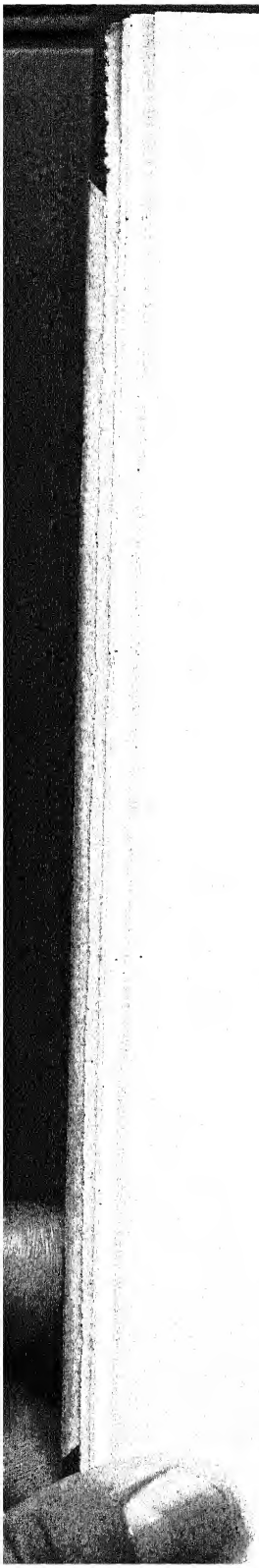
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To

Elisabeth Irwin

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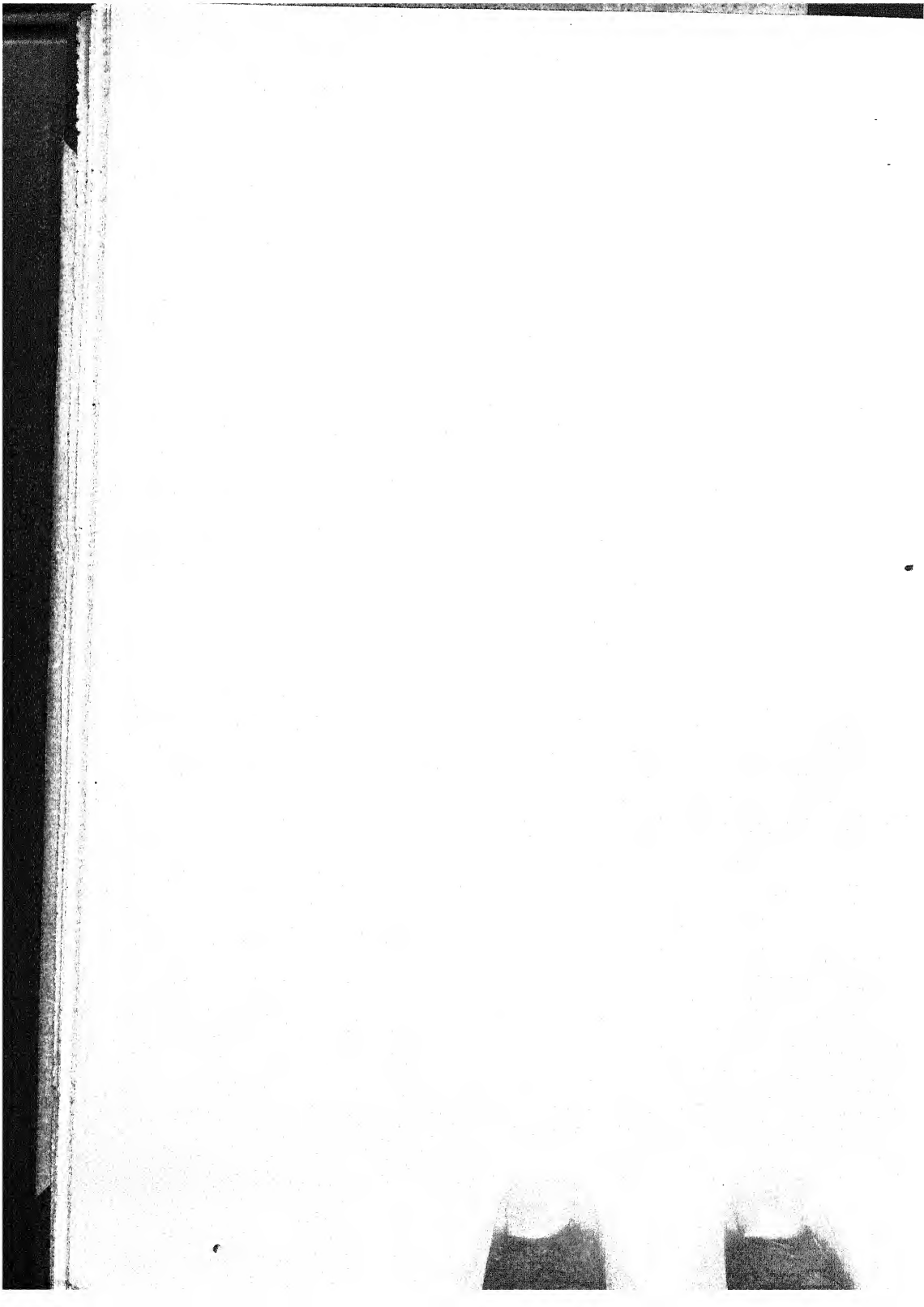
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QUEEN ELIZABETH



Chapter I

BLUEBEARD

I

Henry the Eighth was a descendant of Narcissus. He admired himself very much. As a boy Prince, he danced in his doublet at his sister Margaret's wedding and many years later as reigning King he similarly disported his fine figure before the Venetian Ambassador. Many pages of English history are devoted to the details of his various costumes, his extravagant ornaments, and his sartorial fancies. He was without doubt a very showy King.

His greatest pride was his beard. It was bright red in colour and played an even more important role than his clothes in the annals of its owner. He made a pact with Francis the First of France not to shave until they met, but failed to keep his pledge, because Katharine of Aragon, his Queen, objected. This was in the days when Henry and his first wife were still on friendly terms with each other and Katharine united the duties of Queen of England and Spanish Ambassador at the English court. Her influence, as long as it lasted, gave the Spaniards an unfair advantage over the French in their respective dealings with

the English King. The beard episode was symbolic of the other infidelities, political and otherwise, of Henry. As long as he shared his bed with the Spanish Ambassador, France was greatly handicapped. He was wholly under the influence of the person closest to him.

Katharine's influence lasted nearly twenty years. As long as she agreed with Wolsey, they two were the King. While Henry wore the raiment and the crown, Katharine and the Cardinal dictated the policy of England. One wonders why such a good working combination did not go on forever and why it finally broke down. The answer lies partly in accident and circumstances, but chiefly in the uneven character of the King. He was both amenable and stubborn, loving and unfaithful, childish and dictatorial. Because of his immaturity all of his relationships were destined to final shipwreck.

The estrangement between himself and Katharine was gradual. What she contributed to further it was extreme tactlessness. She was strong and he was weak and she was not always sufficiently adept in concealing the difference. She was, as other wives of Henry were, a better man than the King and was not averse to showing it. When Henry went to war with France, she stayed at home to defend the realm. During his absence her forces defeated the invading Scots and killed their King at Flodden Field. In the mean time, Henry had won the Battle of the Spurs, but Queen

Katharine seems not to have been impressed by her husband's victory. She wrote him she was sending him a slaughtered King in return for a captured Duke. On Henry, who was always sensitive on the score of his manliness, such implied comparisons were not lost. He hated to be beaten by a woman and he began to hate it, if not back in his nursery, at least in his early married life. It was his bad luck to repeat the same experience over and over.

Katharine's feeling of superiority came out in another way. Although she bore the King no sons, the lack was not imputed to her nor felt by her as a fault. The King, on the other hand, felt the matter keenly and blamed himself for it. While Katharine bore her disappointments with philosophy, and while the country did not even lay it up against her, Henry thought he saw a judgment in the situation and nursed a superstitious belief that it was a punishment sent on him for having married his deceased brother's wife. He thought that he had sinned and brooded over it.

II

As long as Wolsey shared the reins of power with Queen Katharine, all went well. The Archbishop and the Queen had something in common: each wore a hair-shirt next the skin and delighted in strenuous work. Between them they ruled the realm while Henry played lawn-tennis until he turned pink under his thin

shirt and wrote learned treatises on theology. They both treated the King a good deal like a child. "I supplicate your Highness," wrote Katharine to her father, the King of Spain, "to do me so signal a favour as to send to the King, my lord, three horses, — one a jennet, and the other from Naples, and the other a Sicilian because he desires them much." Wolsey spoiled him in the same way, as may be seen by the parties which he gave him at York-Place. On one of these occasions the King appeared in masquerade and the Cardinal pretended not to recognize him, addressing a courtier in his stead. At this the King, so runs the story, "hearing and perceiving the Cardinal so deceived in his estimation and choice, could not forbear laughing; but plucked down his visor." How could such a play-boy fail to be popular? How could those who loved him refuse him anything?

When at last the King, whose scruples had grown morbid, began to think of a divorce, the Cardinal listened to him. His habit of humouring the grown-up adolescent was stronger than his judgment and discretion. Catholic sovereigns had been divorced before with the sanction of the Pope and it was not unlikely that Henry might accomplish as much. Besides, a divorce might open the way to a French alliance which seemed to Wolsey desirable. On that side he had hopes that influence might aid him in ultimately becoming Pope. But the strongest factor in his acquiescence was his long-established habit of humouring the King and

giving him whatever plaything he asked for. Henry was already flirting with other women — in fact, even with Anne Boleyn, when Wolsey went to France to find a French princess for his monarch. He did not take Anne seriously enough and stayed away too long. When he returned, he found that she had stolen a march on him and wholly captured for the time the volatile monarch.

III

Henry's relation with Anne Boleyn was his one romance. If he was ever in love at all, it was with this plain but rather piquant Englishwoman. He burst into poetry while he was wooing her.

In appearance she was a great contrast to Queen Katharine, who was short, stout, and red-haired, while Anne was dark, slender, and graceful. Aside from her fine black eyes and long, dark hair, the ill-fated Anne could lay no great claim to beauty. She had a high forehead, a prim mouth, and a flat-breasted figure. If she made the sensuous appeal with which tradition credits her, it must have been expressed through her personality rather than through her physical allurements. A Holbein drawing at Windsor shows her in the lace collar that she wore to conceal a wen on her throat. This blemish was less serious, however, than the incipient sixth finger that marred her left hand. Her name must have had a pleasant sound for Henry, since it was that of a favourite nurse of his,

one Anne Luke, whom he remembered with a generous pension long after he was King. Anne Boleyn, from the first, was firmly resolved that her union should be legal. Her sister Mary had been content to be Henry's mistress — but Anne was made of sterner stuff. For seven years she withstood the King, if his tepid wooing may be said to justify the word, scolding him like a harsh wife all the while that she denied him. Henry complained bitterly to his ministers of the way he was treated. Queen Katharine, he said, had never talked to him like that.

From the beginning of his reign Henry had had many Boleyns around him. Like so many contemporary families, it was noble on one side only, for Anne Boleyn's great-grandfather was a London merchant. Her father was Sir Thomas Boleyn, a boon companion of the King's, a prominent but ungifted person. Henry showered him with favours, but there is no indication that Sir Thomas especially earned them. The Knight of Hever and Blickling seems to have been a good deal like Charles Brandon, who married Mary Tudor, the King's sister. He wore his armour well and married above himself; otherwise little is known of him. His wife, Lady Elizabeth Howard, belonged to one of the oldest ducal families in England. On her mother's side Anne Boleyn's ancestry was noble if not royal.

A curious legend has existed for many years to the effect that Henry the Eighth was Anne Boleyn's father. The freakish theory crops up again and again

in history, if only to be denied. It doubtless reflects the popular intuition that Henry's relation to Anne, who was fifteen years younger than himself, was not unlike that of a father to a daughter. This did not prevent her, however, from ordering the King about like a tactless mother. In the pleasant voice which was one of her chief charms, she gave commands and he followed them. While Wolsey lingered in France, hoping that the King would recover from his infatuation, Anne became more and more the ruler, and Henry the Eighth her subject. When the Cardinal returned, she was ready to demonstrate her power. He sent a message to the King asking where his liege would receive him. "And where else," said Anne, answering for him, "is the Cardinal to come but here where the King is?"

Under her sharp commanding gaze the two men faced each other and knew that an alarming gulf had opened between them.

IV

From his early childhood Henry the Eighth was passionately fond of argument. It was second nature with him to issue a challenge. He dared Erasmus, answered Luther, and defied the Pope. To obtain his divorce he turned all Europe into an intellectual tilting-ground. From Rome to Edinburgh the case was argued. Like a good debater, Henry could defend

both sides. Writing to his sister Margaret in Scotland, who wished to follow his example and put away her husband, Henry argued at great length that marriage was indissoluble. His own was a special case and hinged upon the question whether he had not sinned in marrying his brother Arthur's wife.

This historical dispute really began in the privacy of Henry's family life. The King and Queen quarrelled over it habitually, until gradually the outside world was brought into the row. Wolsey first, then Cranmer, and then the universities of Europe were drawn into the contest. Jewish scholars searched the Mosaic law for evidence, and a host of monks were kept busy supplying him with arguments. Henry strove laboriously to put his case on paper, but never really finished his brief. Four hours of writing, he complained plaintively to Anne, made his head ache.

It sometimes seemed as if the abstract victory was even more passionately sought by Henry than the possession of his beloved. Anne's rival was the divorce case. So preoccupied was her royal lover with this interest that he finally allowed himself to be summoned to a court-hearing in his own kingdom. "Henry, King of England, come into the court!" shouted the crier, and, as if he were a subject, the ruler walked into the Legate's Court. He believed naïvely that his case would be decided on its merits. "Katharine, Queen of England, come into the court!" shouted the crier. The Queen appeared, but only to



HENRY THE EIGHTH. From the painting by Joost van Cleef at Windsor Castle

speak her mind eloquently and sweep out of the room again with offended majesty. The King was obliged to remain and face the trial alone. His chagrin at the final outcome, when the court rose without rendering a decision, was truly pitiable. The Pope had made a fool of him, and his wife as usual had won.

Where was Anne Boleyn all the while the case was being heard? Was she too nervous, perhaps, to work at the fine embroidery at which she was so skilful? Did she have her dogs around her, especially little Purboy, her favourite, to help her while away the tedium of the waiting hours? Perhaps Sir Thomas Heneage, who was accustomed to bring her titbits from the King's table, arrived from time to time with messages from the courtroom about how things were progressing. Was she as hopeful as the King about the outcome of the trial? Apparently she was. Before the chairs were cleared away from the Blackfriars court, she had sworn to be revenged on Wolsey.

V

As a rule, Henry was not free with presents to women. His Queen and his mistresses had been equally neglected in this regard. Anne Boleyn was more fortunate, perhaps because she was more demanding. As he had once heaped titles and honours upon Wolsey, Henry now heaped them upon this lady. Most of his gifts, however, might have been

chosen for a man. The first token that he gave her was a small etui in the shape of a pistol, designed to hold toothpicks. In September 1532 he gave her a peerage and a salary. She was created Marquis of Pembroke, with the title in the masculine form, and at the same time she was given the jewels which Henry had taken from the Queen. Henry was as mean and grasping about such things as his father had been before him.

The Pope was triumphant when he heard of her elevation to the peerage. He thought that Lady Anne had capitulated — as she in fact had done — and that Henry would now turn sensible. In this mood he played into their scheming hands and named Henry's candidate Archbishop of Canterbury. Then things began to happen. In great haste the new Archbishop declared the King divorced, whereupon Anne's friends announced that a marriage had already taken place in the previous January. It had become known that the Marquis of Pembroke was pregnant. With some indelicacy she paraded her craving to eat apples.

Anne's coronation, which soon followed, might have been regarded as a public marriage if Henry had himself taken part in it. But he remained invisible. Anne Boleyn was therefore crowned alone as Queen of England in the month of June 1533, and on this one fact rests her daughter's claim to legitimacy.

In solitary state Anne passed through the streets. The courageous woman, for, whatever else she was,

she was surely brave, faced the public unsupported, "sitting in her hair." She was gazed at, for the most part, silently. The people criticized her flowing locks, which were indeed an odd fancy for an expectant mother, but restrained themselves to whispers. No one cast a stone, but there were no cheers for "Nan Bullen." Within the walls of Whitehall Palace the King welcomed her in privacy with "sweetheart" and embraces.

Three months later, on September 7, 1533, in the room at Greenwich Palace known as the Chamber of the Virgins, the new Queen lay in labour. The official announcement had already been prepared and Henry had again chosen to remain in the backgound. The document was made out in the Queen's name. It began: "Given under our signet at my Lord's Manor of Greenwich, the 7th day of September, in the 25th year of my Lord's reign; Whereas it has pleased the goodness of Almighty God of His infinite mercy and grace to send unto us at this time good speed in the deliverance and bringing forth of a Prince to the great joy and inward comfort of my Lord, us, and of all his good and loving subjects of this his realm"; and it ended with an admonition to "pray for the good health, prosperity, and continual preservation of the said Prince accordingly."

When the child had been delivered, Henry or someone else inserted the letter "s" into the document, which made "Prince" into "Princes." There was no

space for a double "s." So sure had they been of a son that no provision had been made for a possible alteration. By this fact we may guess at Henry's disappointment and Anne Boleyn's chagrin. But their courage seems to have revived quickly. The child's birth was celebrated with the usual rejoicing, and the christening followed with the magnificence usually accorded to a prince.

The babe was called Elizabeth. It was the name of Henry's mother, the long-suffering Elizabeth of York, and also of Anne Boleyn's mother, the Lady Elizabeth Howard. Both of them were patient, homekeeping bodies of whom little is known.

VI

The birth of Princess Elizabeth was the death-blow to Henry's first Queen. Up to this time, though herself relegated to the background, she had lived in her hopes and ambitions for her daughter, Princess Mary. The broken woman now gave up the battle and waited for death in her retirement at Kimbolton. It came when little Elizabeth was two and a half years old and Henry celebrated the news with vulgar cruelty. Clad in bright yellow with a white feather in his cap, he appeared in the audience chamber at Greenwich with the little Princess in his arms. He carried her about the room and showed her off to the courtiers like the proud father that he was, but also like the cad that he

could always turn into on a moment's notice. " Every inch a King," says Pollard, " Henry the Eighth never attained to the stature of a gentleman."

In the mean time Henry, with his usual faith in the immutability of his feelings, had marked all his belongings — his mantels, his musical instruments, his armour — with the initials H. R. and A. B. The most unstable of men, he was a uxorious husband while he lasted. But his second wife now followed in the footsteps of his first with uncanny fidelity. She lost her children as Queen Katharine had done and failed to bear him a living son. We hear more and more of her jaded nerves, her hysterical laughter, and Henry's marked attentions to other women. Her enemies began to creep up upon her and her friends to fall away. She spent the long spring days sitting alone in the park, surrounded by her dogs. Everyone avoided her.

Anne was arrested and executed on the charge of adultery and incest. Besides her brother, four helpless men perished with her. Their fate seems especially pitiable as no one, then or since, has seriously believed them guilty. Out of a clear sky they were dragged to the block and the halter as scapegoats for His Majesty. They were of no great importance to Anne, who probably barely flirted with the nearest of them.

The only one who really mattered to her was her brother, Lord Rochford. Probably the King was jealous of him, and certainly Lord Rochford's wife was jealous of Anne. The least we may assume is that

the brother and sister had always clung closely together and that their respective marriages had not broken the sympathetic tie. They made fun of Henry behind his back, ridiculing his dress and his poetry, tender points with him. They spent long hours closeted together while Lady Rochford complained of her husband's neglect. Out of these circumstances grew the strange charge of incest against them. The tie, whatever its nature was, persisted to the last. " I hear that my Lord my brother is here," said Anne when they had taken her to the Tower. " I am very glad we be so nigh together."

At first it was supposed that Lord Rochford would escape. At worst he could only be convicted of connivance. Then the charge of incest was added and threatened his chances. But it was so thinly supported that the betting in the courtroom was going in his favour, when an unfortunate episode turned the tide against him. A question was handed to him in writing, asking, in French, whether his sister had ever told his wife that the King was impotent. Intentionally or unintentionally, Lord Rochford read the words aloud before the crowded courtroom. There was no longer any hope for him. He was executed before his sister.

In her last days Anne was spared no anguish, even the postponement of her execution in order to avoid a crowd of witnesses. " At my coming," said the Constable of the Tower, " she said: ' Master Kingston, I hear say I shall not die before noon, and I am very

sorry therefor, for I thought to be dead by this time and past my pain.' I told her it should be no pain, it was so subtle. And then she said 'I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck,' and put her hand about it laughing heartily. I have seen many men and also women executed, and all they have been in great sorrow, and to my knowledge this lady has much joy and pleasure in death."

Ten years of suffering had brought her to this pass. Life had grown unbearable and death was almost welcome. The executioner justified her confidence in him and she met her end more calmly than she had borne the rack of long suspense.

Anne Boleyn and her brother were dead. The infant Elizabeth remained a living heritage to the future, while Sir Thomas Boleyn and the King, with lances a-tilt, still went jousting together through the Middle Ages.

Chapter II

BLUEBEARD'S CHILD

I

Three women with rather well-marked personalities presided over Elizabeth's nursery. Of these Dame Margaret Bryan was the most spirited and the most competent. She was the Princess's great-aunt, the

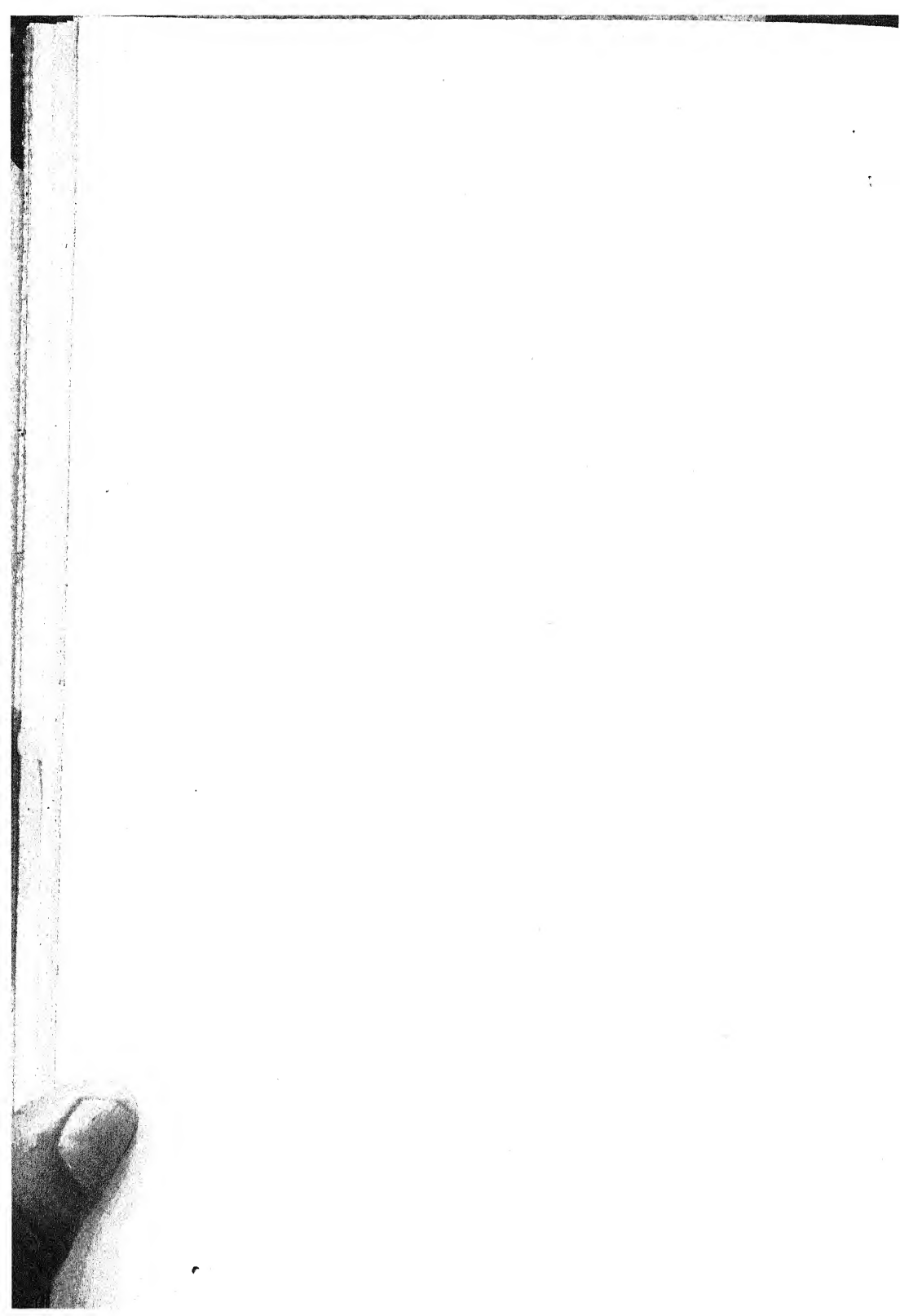
sister of Anne Boleyn's mother. Yet she did not owe her post to the patronage of her niece. She had been lady mistress of Princess Mary's nursery seventeen years before and had been appointed to that post by Henry the Eighth, who was always partial to the Howards. He chose two wives for himself from this family, and one for his natural son, as well as the nurse for all of his three children. Dame Margaret Bryan was given full charge of the infant Elizabeth.

Prior to Anne Boleyn's death, the two half-sisters lived in the same establishment. There was bitter jealousy between them, or, rather, between Lady Anne and her stepdaughter. The new Queen sought in various ways to degrade her rival. For instance, she insisted that Princess Mary should dine in the great public hall instead of alone and at extra cost like royalty. But Mary's governess, Lady Shelton, whose husband was governor of the household, fought for the dignity of the older Princess and won. Later on, when Anne was dead, the Sheltons tried to turn the tables on her offspring. But Dame Bryan was no mean champion, as the letter which she wrote on Elizabeth's behalf well shows. The orphaned Princess was apparently in loyal and devoted hands during her infancy.

"My lord," wrote Lady Bryan to Secretary Cromwell, "when your Lordship was last here, it pleased you to say that I should not mistrust the King's Grace nor your lordship, which word was more comfort to



ANNE BOLEYN. From the drawing by Holbein in the royal collection at Windsor Castle



me than I can write, as God knoweth. And now it emboldens me to show you my poor mind. . . . Now it is so, my Lady Elizabeth is put from that degree she was afore, and what degree she is of now, I know not but by hearsay. Therefore I know not how to order her, nor myself, nor none of hers that I have the rule of — that is, her women and grooms, beseeching you to be good Lord to my lady, and all hers. And that she may have some raiment; for she hath neither gown, nor kirtle, nor petticoat, nor no manner of linen nor smocks, nor kerchiefs, nor sleeves, nor mufflers, nor biggens, all these her Grace must take I have driven off as long as I can, that by my troth I can drive it off no longer: beseeching you, my lord, that ye will see that her Grace may have that which is needful for her, as my trust is that ye will do. . . .

"My lord, Mr. Shelton saith he is master of this house. What fashion that may be I cannot tell, for I have not seen it afore. My lord, be ye so honourable yourself, and every man reporteth that your Lordship loveth honour, that I trust you will see the house honourably ordered, as it ever hath been aforetime. . . .

"My lord, Mr. Shelton would have my Lady Elizabeth to dine and sup every day at the board of estate. Alas! my lord, it is not meet for a child of her age to keep such rule yet. I promise you, my lord, I dare not take it upon me to keep her Grace in health an' she keep that rule. For there she will see divers

meats, and fruits, and wine, which it would be hard for me to restrain her Grace from. Ye know, my lord, there is no place of correction there; and she is yet too young to correct greatly. I know well, an' she be there, I shall neither bring her up to the King's Grace's honour, nor hers, nor to her health, nor to my poor honesty. Wherefore, I show your Lordship this my desire, beseeching you, my lord, that my lady may have a mess of meat at her own lodging, with a good dish or two that is meet for her Grace to eat of; and the reversion of the mess shall satisfy all her women, a gentleman usher, and a groom; which be eleven persons on her side. Sure I am it will be as great profit to the King's Grace this way as the other way. For if all this should be set abroad, they must have three or four messes of meat — whereas this one mess shall suffice them all with bread and drink, according as my Lady Mary's Grace had afore, and to be ordered in all things as her Grace was afore.

"God knoweth my lady hath great pain with her great teeth, and they come very slowly forth, which causeth me to suffer her Grace to have her will more than I would. I trust to God, an' her teeth were well graft, to have her Grace after another fashion than she is yet: so I trust the King's Grace shall have great comfort in her Grace. For she is as toward a child, and as gentle of conditions, as ever I knew any in my life. Jesu preserve her Grace!

"As for a day or two, at a high time, or whensoever

it shall please the King's Grace to have her set abroad, I trust so to endeavour me that she shall do as shall be to the King's honour and hers; and then after to take her ease again. . . . From Hunsdon, with the evil hand of her who is your daily bead-woman, Margt. Bryan."

It has been often said that Queen Elizabeth inherited from her mother her characteristic traits of loyalty and staunchness. Perhaps the true transmitter of these qualities was Dame Bryan, who remained in charge for several years. The baby Prince Edward was likewise in her care and the children shared the same nursery. "Until my seventh year," says Edward's journal, "I was brought up among the women." She must have died about this time, as we hear no more of her.

Katharine Ashley and Blanche Parry were younger than Dame Bryan, belonging to Anne Boleyn's generation. They survived until well into the later life of the Queen, who kept them always with her. But they were subservient. A marble statue of Blanche Parry shows her kneeling on a pillow at Queen Elizabeth's feet, no doubt a characteristic attitude. At court she was custodian of the Queen's jewels and read the palms of the ladies-in-waiting. Devoted and superstitious, she had no will to oppose to an imperious young Princess. She remained a spinster all her life, and the Queen did not confide in her to any extent.

With Dame Katharine Ashley, Elizabeth was

always more intimate. The Ashley couple were friends of Roger Ascham and products in the new learning. Although Dame Ashley was Elizabeth's teacher as well as nurse, and Ascham wrote to her as if she were a learned woman, giving her pedagogical advice and a silver pen, she was not apparently a woman of firm character. In spite of Ascham's counsel, she spoiled her pupil and indulged her. Consequently, she was the only woman toward whom the Queen ever showed any warmth of feeling. Kate Ashley came as near to being her confidante as anyone ever was. Like Juliet's nurse, Dame Ashley had no thought but for her "lady-bird." This was probably the source of Elizabeth's lifelong devotion, rather than the pious reason which she once gave for it. "St. Gregory sayeth," she wrote, "that we are more bound to them that bringeth us up well than to our parents, for our parents do that which is natural for them that bringeth us into this world, but our bringers up are a cause to make us live well in it."

II

Henry the Eighth often expressed a contempt for women, but it was not his true attitude. He gave his daughters the same scholarly education that he had had without questioning its propriety. They began their classical studies at the age of seven and were instructed by masculine tutors as strictly as if they had been sons. To be sure, it was a far cry from the

rough old Skelton, who taught young Henry so many things not found in books, to the gentle and well-bred Roger Ascham, who trained Princess Elizabeth. But the method and high intention were not different, as far as the paternal plans were concerned, for Henry's daughters had to come as near to being the missing sons as possible. He taught them the classics and foreign languages instead of putting them into doublet and hose.

His daughter Mary was an excellent student as befitted the great-grand-daughter of Lady Margaret, the patroness of Caxton, and the grand-daughter of Queen Isabella, the sponsor of Columbus. Her father was immensely proud of her intellect and accomplishments, and Mary grew up to be somewhat priggish about them. "And I wis," she said petulantly on one occasion, when she had been reduced to taking care of her own household, "my father and my mother never brought me up with baking and brewing."

The younger Princess followed in the footsteps of the elder. There was a period after Anne Boleyn's death when they were both outcasts, both having been declared illegitimate, and adversity brought them close together in spite of the seventeen years' difference in their ages. Mary wrote kind words to the King about the child. "My sister Elizabeth is in good health (thanks to our Lord), and such a child toward, as I doubt not but your Highness shall have cause

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II

Henry the Eighth often expressed a contempt for women, but it was not his true attitude. He gave his daughters the same scholarly education that he had had without questioning its propriety. They began their classical studies at the age of seven and were instructed by masculine tutors as strictly as if they had been sons. To be sure, it was a far cry from the

rough old Skelton, who taught young Henry so many things not found in books, to the gentle and well-bred Roger Ascham, who trained Princess Elizabeth. But the method and high intention were not different, as far as the paternal plans were concerned, for Henry's daughters had to come as near to being the missing sons as possible. He taught them the classics and foreign languages instead of putting them into doublet and hose.

His daughter Mary was an excellent student as befitted the great-grand-daughter of Lady Margaret, the patroness of Caxton, and the grand-daughter of Queen Isabella, the sponsor of Columbus. Her father was immensely proud of her intellect and accomplishments, and Mary grew up to be somewhat priggish about them. "And I wis," she said petulantly on one occasion, when she had been reduced to taking care of her own household, "my father and my mother never brought me up with baking and brewing."

The younger Princess followed in the footsteps of the elder. There was a period after Anne Boleyn's death when they were both outcasts, both having been declared illegitimate, and adversity brought them close together in spite of the seventeen years' difference in their ages. Mary wrote kind words to the King about the child. "My sister Elizabeth is in good health (thanks to our Lord), and such a child toward, as I doubt not but your Highness shall have cause

to rejoice of in time coming, as knoweth Almighty God." The arrival of a younger brother brought them still more in harmony, for the birth of the little Prince of Wales relegated them both from the race for the succession in a way which must have been almost a comfort.

The precocious little sister competed with the grown-up Princess in grave looks and stately manners. At the age of six she received an envoy from her father with preternatural dignity.

"I went then to my Lady Elizabeth's Grace," says the King's messenger, Sir Thomas Wriothesley, "and to the same made the King's Majesty's most hearty commendations, declaring that his Highness desired to hear of her health, and sent his blessing. She gave humble thanks, and that with as great a gravity as she had been forty years old. If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove of no less honour and womanhood than shall beseem her father's daughter."

It was only natural that Elizabeth should have looked to Mary for an example of exalted demeanour. Mary was the only woman in her environment who represented royalty. She was the offspring of the world's highest culture, for Spain was then the Beau Brummel among nations, the home of fine manners and silk stockings, where people were inclined to look down from great heights on the crude English. The child of Anne Boleyn must have early realized her

inferior ancestry and tried unconsciously to imitate her Spanish-English sister.

It would be interesting to know where the two girls got the deep contralto voices, sometimes referred to as harsh, which characterized them both in womanhood. As they shared the red hair of the Tudors, they also had this common trait, however it originated. It is possible that the younger sister acquired it from the elder, but where did Mary hear the voice which led her to fix her own at such a deep masculine pitch? It is hard to imagine the perennial baby mouth of Henry the Eighth emitting these chest tones. Easier is it to suppose that firm Queen Katharine inherited them from the still firmer Queen Isabella, and handed this *basso profundo* on down to the Princesses of England. But whoever set the style for them, both of the Tudor Princesses had a strong motive for adopting the unfeminine trait. Circumstances compelled them from their earliest infancy to play the part of men in life, whether they liked the role or not. A harsh commanding voice may have been a help to them in this.

III

When Elizabeth was four years old, her father presented her with a baby brother by his third wife, Jane Seymour. This child, motherless almost as soon as born, was entrusted to Dame Bryan and shared

the nursery of Elizabeth. The little Princess mothered him and, when she was six and he was two, made him a cambric shirt. It was at about this time that she impressed the ambassador with her great gravity and *sang froid*. Responsibility was already bred in her and she took her duties as elder sister seriously, almost too seriously, it appears. Her brother, says Robert Naunton, "was scarce his own man, she being absent."

When the Prince's formal education began at the age of seven, his sister shared his tutors. The pathetic precocity of this boy soon brought him to the point of competing with his sister on terms of intellectual equality. He was an accomplished linguist at the age of nine. They corresponded with each other in Latin and Elizabeth acquired thereby a Ciceronian style which remained with her through life, pervading her English correspondence and making her letters read like orations.

All the emphasis of her childhood was placed on brains and book-learning. They remained through life her highest values. To the end of her days she believed in them. "I shall never fear," she said in her last years, referring to Philip the Third, "the threats of a Prince was twelve years in learning his alphabet." In keeping with this attitude, she never lost a chance of showing off her own knowledge. Numerous anecdotes are told of such naïve displays. Her skill in languages was often noted by foreign

ambassadors and especially mentioned in their dispatches; but some of them also perceived a tendency to lift her voice and talk loud enough in Italian, French, or Latin to be heard by everybody in the courtroom or even in the garden. Her book of prayers, composed by herself and written in four languages, was left lying around carelessly for everyone to see.

The education of Elizabeth and her brother Edward was strictly Puritan. The names of their tutors — Sir Anthony Cooke, Sir John Cheke, William Grindall, and Roger Ascham — are names which are associated with the English reformation. A religious exile from Italy taught them Italian and a Calvinist refugee taught them French. In their Protestant environment there was no discordant note. It does not show the guiding hand of Henry, who remained more Catholic than Protestant to the end of his days. Apparently the Seymour influence was already at the helm in the person of Sir Edward Seymour, afterwards the Lord Protector and a Protestant of the extreme type. He surrounded the two children with religious enthusiasts from whom they imbibed the new Protestant ideas along with their ancient conjugations and declensions. Elizabeth was not merely a Protestant queen because she was the daughter of Anne Boleyn. Her education as well as her birth determined her religious bent.

That which modified her attitude was not Romanism but Hellenism. The revival of Greek in

England was the great divide which separated her education, and that of Edward, from the education of her sister Mary. Elizabeth was seven years old when the first professorship of Greek was founded at Cambridge. This was important for her because it was the year in which her own formal schooling began. At first William Grindall and afterwards Roger Ascham were her tutors for this language. With them she read not only the Greek Testament, but also the Greek orators and dramatists, and the influence of the pagan writers was not lost on her. She was and always remained a Protestant and there was more of conscience in her attitude than has been generally believed. But she was also enough of a pagan to take a middle ground without hypocrisy and to balance herself easily on a tentative creed. She kept it up continuously for thirty-five years.

Incidentally, her interest in Greek was not diminished by the fact that between her and her English tutor there was a great deal of sympathy. "I teach her the tongues to speak," said Ascham, "and her modest and maidenly looks teach me works to do, for I think she is the best disposed of any in all Europe."

It was from Ascham that she learned the handwriting for which she is so famous. He was her master in calligraphy and it was his own beautiful script that his royal pupil emulated. She learned from him to write a bold clear hand, with each character as perfectly formed as if on the page of an illuminated manu-

script. Her skill never failed her. At the most disturbed and emotional moment of her life — when she was about to be led a prisoner to the Tower — she wrote the same faultless hand which she once produced in the quiet schoolroom. What she learned from Ascham apparently she did not forget.

It is possible that she owed to him, or rather to his method of instruction, her extraordinary English style. Ascham's method of translating the classics into English and then back again and his insistence on written work obviously left their mark. Her ordinary English reads like a literal translation and her translations never achieve the quality of smooth English. There is something in their relationship which suggests that Ascham was just a little easy on his brilliant pupil and that she was a bit complacent about her accomplishments. In any case, there is an awkwardness and obscurity of phrasing in all that she wrote for which the famous schoolmaster must be at least partly to blame. The bad habits of the schoolroom were all too sincere and too well learned to be eradicated. When Ascham died, the Queen exclaimed that she would "rather have lost ten thousand pounds than her old tutor Ascham."

IV

After several years spent in the hands of masculine teachers, Elizabeth came under the guidance of a

woman again. From the days of Lady Bryan until her father married Katharine Parr, no woman had been close to her except the doting Ashley. The last of Henry's wives was something of a "clerk," as her husband resentfully called her, and as such she commanded her stepdaughter's respect. She was, besides, a motherly woman and inclined to take her duties seriously. The poor little learned children had been sadly neglected by the wretched, harassed King during his last ill-starred marriages. But his union with the widow promised better things for them. The Queen invited the three children as well as the Scottish niece and adopted daughter, Margaret Douglas, to come and live at Whitehall.

For the first time in her life the ten-year-old Elizabeth had a taste of something like home and family life. She was installed in rooms adjoining those of the King and Queen. The happy intimacy however did not long endure, for the young girl was soon mysteriously sent away again. As to what had happened we can only speculate. It was apparently the first time since her infancy that Henry and his second daughter had ever been closely associated. Henry was at his best in briefer contacts, cantering up to a greeting on his best Sicilian and sweeping his hat to the ground in gallant leave-taking. But his standards were too high to be lived up to continually and he hated the object who expected it of him. Perhaps some feeling of this kind made Elizabeth's daily

presence unwelcome. It is also possible that the growing girl, mature beyond her years, looked unbearably like her mother. This seems all the more likely when we remember that Whitehall was the scene of Henry's first meeting with Anne Boleyn, that together they had taken the place away from Wolsey, and that together they had occupied the premises in royal state. The galleries and chambers of Whitehall were eloquent of Queen Anne. The young Princess with her prim mouth and grown-up ways may have called the dead woman to life again. These things would have contributed to her banishment, whatever her own fault may have been. Henry could not bear the remotest suggestion that he was in the wrong.

For some time after her banishment, she dared not write to her father, not even while he was away with his army in France. "I understand," she wrote to Katharine Parr, "that your most illustrious Highness has not forgotten me every time you have written to the King's Majesty, which, indeed, it was my duty to have requested from you. For heretofore I have not dared to write to him. Wherefore I now humbly pray you most excellent Highness that, when you write to His Majesty, you will condescend to recommend me to him. . . ."

This is the only echo of the estrangement that we gain from Elizabeth. There is no indication that she moped with disappointment or bewailed her loneliness. At the age of eleven she was already

accustomed to rule her own establishment and probably preferred her own little kingdom to the humbler place she occupied in the Whitehall constellation. But naturally it did not salve her wound to have her sister Mary and her cousin, Margaret Douglas, retained at court.

Nevertheless, her relations with her stepmother continued to be close and intimate, as her studies under Katharine Parr for the next two years indicate. The Queen was a Protestant and an even more earnest believer than Elizabeth's tutors had been. We hear no more of her Greek and Latin authors at this time, but see the studious girl instead bending over religious works in foreign languages. *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul,* by Margaret of Navarre, was her principal translation of this period. The choice has significance, for the French Queen who composed the poem had long been a Lutheran and the patroness of the Protestants of her country. It was during her youthful sojourn in France that Elizabeth's mother had first imbibed the ideas that led to her rise and fall. She had originally felt the influence of the gifted Queen whose writings were half mystical and half obscene. The *Mirror of the Sinful Soul,* which Elizabeth translated, was the forerunner of the *Heptameron,* which, as far as we know, Elizabeth never saw. Her own development showed something the same great change from piety to wantonness.

At twelve, however, she was extremely religious,

as most children are inclined to be. She continued to translate prayers and meditations which were selected by her stepmother, turning English into Latin, French, and Italian with great industry. For her brother, aged ten, she translated a sermon for a New Year's gift. The manuscripts when finished were bound in embroidered covers of exquisite workmanship. Her needlework had the same perfect quality as her penmanship.

Between Katharine Parr and Elizabeth existed a curious sympathy. There was a common strain in them. The girl in her first teens and the thrice-married woman in her thirties understood each other. The precocious Princess was at home with her elders and the amiable stepmother met her half-way. They were both wholly English, as was neither Princess Mary nor Lady Margaret Douglas, and, being English, they were Protestants for that reason if for no other. Viewing the future shrewdly, Katharine Parr ventured upon a prophecy which she imparted to her stepdaughter. "I believe," she said, "that you are destined by heaven to be the Queen of England." Elizabeth had long had the same idea.

Chapter III

THE PRINCESS AND THE PIRATE

I

The death of Henry the Eighth, though long apprehended, eventually came suddenly. Taken by surprise, the Seymours and their friends concealed the fact for three days while they secured the persons of the orphaned Prince and his sister Elizabeth. When the unwieldy remnant of the once-glorious King Henry had been lowered into the vault at Windsor, Elizabeth was separated from her brother and sent to live with her stepmother at Chelsea.

The new King, gentle and intellectual, but helpless as a choir-boy, was entirely in the hands of his domineering uncle. Sir Edward Seymour, later the Duke of Somerset, was the *de facto* monarch. According to the late King's will, this was to be ordered otherwise. Henry, who had himself acceded to the throne at the age of eighteen, planned that his son should do the same. In the mean time the government was to be invested in an executive council of sixteen and an advisory council of twelve, all of them named and specified in the King's last testament. Without doubt the Duke of Somerset had helped to compose this document and name his coadjutors, but once the King

was dead he saw his opportunity and was tempted to go even further. The obedient Council named him Lord Protector of the realm, and from that point he proceeded as if he were sovereign. A radical Protestant with republican tendencies, he was by temperament a dictator and his first resort in every case was to force. Naturally he was hated, especially by the repressed Edward and his own younger brother, Thomas Seymour.

Jane Seymour's brother Thomas has come down in history as an exceptionally handsome man. "Of person rare, strong limbs and manly shape," wrote Sir John Harington underneath his picture. At jousting and tilting, where a fine figure and good horsemanship show off to great advantage, he especially excelled. In the days of King Henry, Sir Thomas Seymour and his brother held the field against all comers. The King had valued him for other things as well, for he had appointed him Master of Ordnance for life and named him Lord High Admiral of the English Navy. The first injustice which Sir Thomas felt was in the terms of Henry's will, which appointed Sir Edward to the executive council and Sir Thomas only to the advisory group. The bitter rivalry which grew out of this was destined to destroy them both.

Sir Thomas Seymour, Baron of Sudeley, was a charming individual with a dash of the modern about him. He had led an adventurous roving life buying guns for the King in Germany, and he had travelled

about the continent from one end to the other. As Lord High Admiral, he had sailed the seas in search of pirates, for the English Channel in those times was infested with them, and France and England had been obliged to combine, with all their differences, in an effort to get rid of them. The Lord High Admiral of the English Navy had been assigned to the task.

In the springtime of the year 1547 Sir Thomas set sail to break up a nest of such marauders in the Scilly Isles. The head of the band, one Thomessin, was an elusive outlaw with an unsuspected force of personality. What passed between the Admiral and this man when they met can only be imagined, for no one has reported the encounter. Probably the pirate did not out-swear the Admiral, whose profanity was only equalled by that of the late King. Like the late King too, of whom it is said that he "loved a man," Seymour was susceptible to the attractions of his own sex. He was a boon companion. Perhaps the Admiral and the outlaw had too much in common for one to knife the other. In the end Sir Thomas sailed away and left Thomessin unmolested in the stronghold where he found him.

This was the beginning, but not yet the end, of Seymour's association with these gentlemen of the sea. He connived at their offences and shared their spoils in spite of the warnings of his brother. When outraged protests began to pour in from France, the Lord

Protector was exceedingly embarrassed. But still the headstrong Admiral paid no heed to his remonstrances. Sir Thomas probably told himself that his course was as honest as that of his brother, who was busy seizing one piece of Church property after the other and turning the proceeds only partly into grammar schools. The ducal palace which was rising in the Strand showed all too plainly what was done with the rest of it. The younger Seymour also had ambitions, but he was more visionary. He dreamed of founding a new country out beyond the seas in that new land to westward, where he would be king, not merely of the Scilly Isles, but of an unmeasured continent.

Ships, money, and men were necessary for the realization of these vast enterprises. He made friends with the Channel privateers, multiplied the number of his retainers beyond the quota allowed and was alleged to have designs upon a mint. His visions overmastered him and he talked wildly to his friends.

II

The Admiral's love-affairs, which coincided with his political dreams, were brief and tragic. Although he was nearing the age of forty, he had had, as far as we know, no serious entanglements. At any rate he was still a bachelor. As if to make up for lost time, he now fell in love with two women at once and

proposed simultaneously to both of them. They were the widow of the late King Henry, the Dowager Queen Katharine Parr, and the Princess Elizabeth. The exact moment when Lord Seymour proposed to each is uncertain, but he must have offered himself in some form to them both just after the death of King Henry. Within a month from this date Elizabeth had refused him and he was married to Katharine Parr.

According to some versions, there was a formal proposal of marriage on the part of Lord Seymour and a formal refusal on the part of Elizabeth. But this seems unlikely. It was not in their characters to be so definite. The legend, however, lends confirmation to the view that the Princess and the Admiral were interested in each other before the Admiral married Queen Katharine. Elizabeth must have known Lord Seymour for a long time and well, for his family had befriended her from infancy and she had lived with her brother at the Seymour country-seat. At the same time she was in close communion with her stepmother. The friendly triangle must already have existed in the last days of King Henry and already have contained the seeds of future tragedy.

When Katharine Parr consented to marry Sir Thomas Seymour, she proposed that they should wait two years. But the good woman was not firm in her requirements. The unseemly haste of the following nuptials offended everybody, not the least of whom was Princess Mary. She wrote at once to her sister

Elizabeth urging her to leave the Chelsea household and come and live with her. But Elizabeth, giving diplomatic reasons for her refusal, preferred to stay where she was.

Considering all that had gone before, the situation of the Chelsea trio might at least be called delicate. Outwardly it was not so very dissimilar to that which had existed at Whitehall three years previously, when Elizabeth had lodged next to her father and Katharine Parr. The Princess was still under parental supervision, and the Admiral was quite old enough to take her father's place. But inwardly the case was different. Seymour's attitude toward Elizabeth, whether he had proposed to her or not, placed her on a footing of equality with the older woman. She showed that she felt this by asserting her own will against the wishes of Katharine Parr. For instance, she insisted on having Ascham back as her tutor, although Queen Katharine, supported by Seymour, preferred someone else.

Very quickly, in the *ménage à trois,* a flirtation sprouted between the girl and her foster-father. The governess, Kate Ashley, subsequently described it for the Privy Council. " At Chelsea," she said, " after my Lord Thomas Seymour was married to the Queen, he would come many mornings into the Lady Elizabeth's chamber before she was ready, and sometimes before she did rise; and if she were up, he would bid her good-morrow, and ax how she did, and strike her

on the back or on the buttocks familiarly, and so go forth to his chamber, and sometimes go through to her maidens and play with them. And if the Princess were in bed, he would put open the curtains and bid her good-morrow, and she would go further in bed. . . . At Hanworth, for two mornings, the Queen was with him, and they both tickled my Lady Elizabeth in her bed. . . . At Seymour Place, when the Queen slept there, he did use awhile to come up every morning in his night-gown and slippers."

The summer brought even more freedom and sprightliness. The Princess, though in mourning for her father, was in high spirits. The jocund Admiral and she were playfellows and Katharine Parr looked on with tolerance, sometimes joining in. The games, as they were afterwards described in evidence, were anything but harmless. On one occasion, for instance, " he romped with her in the garden, and cut her gown, being black cloth, into a hundred pieces." That the Princess was still childish, in spite of her precocity, is shown by the governess's further statement " that when she came up and chid Lady Elizabeth, she answered, she could not strive at all, for the Queen held her while the Lord Admiral cut her dress." Animal spirits such as these were too much even for Mistress Ashley. She sought out the Admiral, as the elder and the more blameworthy, and remonstrated with him. But Seymour answered, almost as childishly as his fellow culprit, that, by God's death, he would tell the

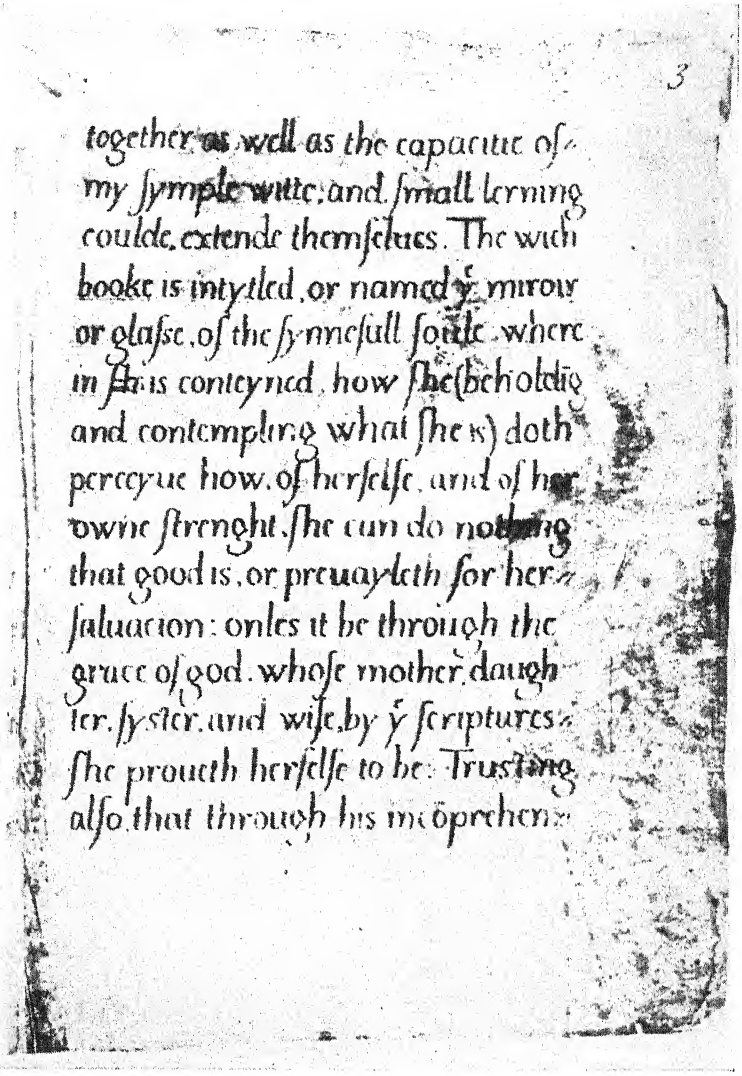
Lord Protector how he was slandered and that he would not leave off for he meant no evil.

And so the winter passed without any change in the relationship. Spring came and with it a new element entered into the situation. Katharine Parr, after three sterile marriages, was pregnant; her fourth husband, not unnaturally, felt a sense of triumph; and their ward, the ardent young Princess, was warmly sympathetic. The expectant mother, however, did not bear her state without sickness, and the harmony of the trio was soon interrupted. As sometimes happens on such occasions, the husband looked around for comfort and found it, in this case, quite close at hand. His attentions to Elizabeth became more eager and his opportunities for being alone with her increased. The Queen, in the sixth month of her pregnancy, came one day unexpectedly upon them — Elizabeth and Lord Seymour — "he having her in his arms." He must have had her in his arms before this and often, and so it must have been the secrecy which offended his lawful wife. We gather that she was offended and that the Princess was frightened. Perhaps the Admiral was at last frightened too.

Whether Elizabeth took flight or was banished does not appear. She went away; and another pair of guardians took charge of her household. Her relations with her former friends were not broken off, however, for she continued to write to, and receive letters from,

both of them. Two months after her departure she wrote: "Although your Highness's letters be most joyful to me in absence, yet, considering what pain it is to you to write, your Grace being so great with child, and so sickly, your commendation were enough in my lord's letter. I much rejoice at your health, with the well liking of the country, with my humble thanks that your Grace wished me with you till I were weary of that country. Your Highness were like to be cumbered if I should not depart till I were weary of being with you; although it were the worst soil in the world, your presence would make it pleasant. I cannot reprove my lord for not doing your commendations in his letter, for he did it; and although he had not, yet I will not complain on him, for he shall be diligent to give me knowledge from time to time how his busy child doth; and if I were at his birth, no doubt I would see him beaten, for the trouble he hath put you to. Master Denny and my lady, with humble thanks, prayeth most entirely for your Grace, praying the Almighty God to send you a most lucky deliverance; and my mistresses wisheth no less, giving your Highness most humble thanks for her commendations, written with very little leisure, this last day of July. Your humble daughter, Elizabeth."

The tie which still bound the little group was the unborn child, now eagerly expected by all three. "I hear that my little man doth shake his belly," wrote the expectant father during an absence, and Katha-



HANDWRITING OF ELIZABETH, at the age of eleven. From *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul,* Asher and Co., London

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rine Parr replied, "I gave your little knave your blessing, who like an honest man stirred apace, after and before." The Admiral, who felt himself ill-used by his brother, looked forward to the day when his son would defend him. "If God will give him leave to live as long as his father," he said to Katharine Parr, "he will revenge such wrongs as neither you nor I can at this present, the world is such, God amend it."

The birth of the longed-for child heaped tragedy on disappointment. It proved to be a daughter instead of a son, and it cost the mother her life. After a week of illness and delirium, in which she uttered vague, disquieting reproaches against her husband, Queen Katharine passed away. Her death took place on Elizabeth's fourteenth birthday.

For the young girl, this meant another shock. Her sudden parting with Lord Seymour had been the first. How far her indiscretions went with him has never been brought out. To the world she always afterwards insisted that she was a virgin; which may be an indication that she realized what a narrow escape she had had at this time. Certain it is that the intimacy between the two approached a sexual union, and that, if it did not reach this point, the interruption was cataclysmic. The abrupt awakening and the swift flight of the thirteen-year-old girl are easy to imagine and to commiserate. And then, before she had had time to recover from the shock, she felt the staggering blow

of death descending, like a lightning stroke, close beside her. These experiences were in themselves sufficiently devastating, without the exposure and bereavement which were to follow.

III

Whatever the death of Katharine Parr may have meant to Princess Elizabeth, it meant a vast deal more to Sir Thomas Seymour. Had this shrewd, long-suffering lady lived, she might have saved the Admiral from the worst of his follies. For Seymour's crimes were little more than light-minded schemes. He was an incorrigible day-dreamer and, as it turned out, the death of his wife gave him means and opportunity to indulge this trend. Whatever may have been the course of their short-lived marriage, Katharine Parr certainly doted on her handsome errant husband. She left her entire fortune to the middle-aged idealist and adventurer, who, by her death, was cut adrift without anchor or rudder. He used his freedom and his fortune in peculiar ways of which his brother and the Privy Council did not approve.

He wooed the young King insidiously. Forty pounds slipped to his tutor, with instructions to keep twenty and give twenty to young Edward, was a specimen of his avuncular approaches. The pious Sir John Cheke succumbed to his arts as well as the royal fledgling. The little prodigy was found secretly laying bets

and gambling in the intervals of reading Greek and writing in his unchildish journal. He was more than ready to make common cause with this genial uncle against the rigid Lord Protector, who had even gone so far in his puritanical surveillance as to forbid the King to receive the usual New Year's gifts. Thus the innocent young monarch became the bone of contention between the brothers, increasing day by day their fatal jealous discord.

> "Forgetting God to love a King,
> Hath been my Rod, or else nothing,"

wrote the Admiral in a sonnet which he composed in the Tower, where, in January 1549, he was imprisoned. He had been arrested by the Privy Council and charged with thirty-three offences. Their substance simmered down to three; first, that he had plotted to obtain control of the King's person (which, by his own admission, is very probable); second, that he had "gone about" to marry the Princess Elizabeth without the consent of the King and the Privy Council (which is highly debatable); and, third, that he had encouraged pirates and received stolen goods from them (which is well-nigh positive). According to the easy justice of those days, in which torture, robbery, and lynch-law were legal, the hapless Admiral was stripped of all his property and condemned unheard on every count. His brother signed his death-warrant. One week before his execution he wrote the indifferent

poetry from which the above lines are quoted. They express the resignation which was conventional with the victims of those times and close with the wish that the

> Lord send the King like years as Noye,
> In governing this realm in joy.

There is no reference in the sonnet of any kind to Elizabeth.

The relationship between the Princess and the Admiral was on the wane before the Privy Council heard of it. All the evidence in the trial was long-past history. The Council suspected him of planning a coup with the King's half-sister largely because of his previous haste in marrying Queen Katharine. The Princess's household, who had witnessed his former behaviour toward their mistress, naturally expected him to woo her now in good earnest. Dame Ashley, the Admiral's chief partisan, blew upon the fading coals with her careless chatter. If anybody could be blamed for the Admiral's misfortunes it was surely this misguided woman who wanted to see her lady-bird happily married. She was too romantic and too provincial to realize the great issues and vast interests that were at stake and was apparently in love with the Admiral herself.

The Princess was wary, but not wary enough. She talked very little even to Mistress Ashley, but that little showed her interest and was enough to stimulate

further gossip and unexpected cross-currents. Her steward, Thomas Parry, described by the Spanish Ambassador as "a silent, fat man," had seemed an innocuous person devoted to the Princess. At any rate, she had trusted him, next to Katharine Ashley. He was sent to London at this point on a business matter which had arisen, logically enough, between the Admiral and the Princess. The impression which he gained there from Seymour's conversation seemed to corroborate the gossip of the fatuous Ashley. Lord Seymour, disregarding the silent steward as innocuous, showed too much interest in Elizabeth's financial standing and her future income. It struck the steward unpleasantly. Perhaps he thought of his account-books, which were not exactly straight at that particular moment. Perhaps he over-estimated the resolution of the Admiral, whose intentions were always inclined to evaporate in the form of words. In any case, Thomas Parry believed, like Kate Ashley, that Seymour wished to marry the Princess, but he did not agree with her about Seymour's desirability as Elizabeth's consort.

He told the governess that the Admiral was a jealous man and was said to have been a cruel husband. But Mistress Ashley would not listen to his warnings. "Tush, tush," she said, "that is no matter. I know him better than you do, or those that report him. I know that he will make but too much of her, and that she knows well enough. And as for the jealousy

of my Lord Admiral I will tell you: as he came upon a time upstairs to see the Queen, he met with a groom of the chamber upon the stairs with a coal-basket coming out of the chamber, and because the door was shut and my lord without, he was angry, and pretended that he was jealous."

"By my faith!" said Parry, "all the world speak evil of him for all this?"

"No, no," said Ashley. "But I would wish her none before him for all this."

It is noteworthy that the whole story came out through the steward. Whether he dropped a hint in quarters inimical to Seymour and calculated to do him harm, no one will ever know. But he and the governess were whisked off simultaneously and clapped into the Tower as soon as Seymour was arrested. The Princess found herself a prisoner in her house at Hatfield with an agent of the Privy Council in charge of her. The custodian, Sir Robert Tyrwhitt, proceeded to cross-question her and to use upon the solitary, friendless girl the immemorial methods of the Inquisition. One day he surprised her with the written deposition of the steward. Although it had been extracted under compulsion, and threat of the rack, Elizabeth was shocked at Parry's perfidy, and she allowed the phrase "False wretch!" to escape her. But this was her only unguarded moment during two weeks of frightful grilling. Wearily Sir Robert at last confessed that he could get nothing out of her. "They all sing

the same note," he said disgustedly, referring to Elizabeth and her two servants in the Tower.

The Lord Protector made a last effort to elicit a confession from the Princess. He advised her to take him into her confidence and write him a letter telling him everything. Elizabeth almost blandly consented.

"My lord," she wrote, "Your great gentleness and good will towards me, as well in this thing as in other things, I do understand, for the which even as I ought, so I do give you humble thanks; and whereas your Lordship willeth and counselleth me as an earnest friend, to declare what I know in this matter, and also to write what I have declared to Master Tyrwhitt, I shall most willingly do it. I declared unto him first, that after the cofferer had declared unto me what my Lord Admiral answered, for Allen's matter, and for Durham Place; he told me that my Lord Admiral did offer me his house for my time being with the King's Majesty, and further said and asked me, if the Council did consent that I should have my Lord Admiral, whether I would consent to it, or no. I answered that I would not tell him what my mind was; and I further inquired of him, what he meant by asking me that question, or who bade him say so. He answered me, and said: Nobody bade him say so, but that he perceived, as he thought, by my Lord Admiral inquiring whether my patent were sealed or no, and debating what he spent in his house, and inquiring

what was spent in my house, that he was given that way rather than otherwise.

"And as concerning Kate Ashley, she never advised me to it, but said always, when any talked of my marriage, that she would never have me marry, neither in England nor out of England, without the consent of the King's Majesty, your Grace's, and the Council's. And after the Queen was departed [deceased], when I asked of her what news she heard from London, she answered merrily: 'They say your Grace shall have my Lord Admiral, and that he will shortly come to woo you.' And, moreover, as I said unto him, that the cofferer sent a letter hither, that my lord said that he would come this way as he went down into the country. Then I bade her write as she thought best, and bade her show it to me when she had done; so she wrote, 'that she thought it not best for fear of suspicion,' and so it went forth, and the Lord Admiral, after he had heard that asked the cofferer, why he might not come to me as well as to my sister; and then I desired Kate Ashley to write again (lest my lord might think that she knew more in it than he), that she knew nothing, but only suspected, and I also told Master Tyrwhitt that to the effect of the matter, I never consented to any such thing without the Council's consent thereto. And as for Kate Ashley and the cofferer, they never told me they would practise it. These be the things that I declared to Master Tyrwhitt, and also, whereof my conscience



QUEEN ELIZABETH, AS PRINCESS, aged about fourteen.
From the painting at Windsor Castle

LIBRARY OF EWING CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
ALLAHABAD.

beareth me witness, which I would not for all earthly things offend in anything, for I know I have a soul to be saved as well as other folks have, wherefore I will, above all things, have respect unto this same. If there be any more things which I can remember, I will either write it myself, or cause Mr. Tyrwhitt to write it.

"Master Tyrwhitt and others have told me that there goeth rumours abroad, which be greatly both against my honour and honesty, which, above all things, I esteem, which be these, that I am in the Tower, and with child by my Lord Admiral. My lord, these be shameful slanders, for which, besides the great desire I have to see the King's Majesty, I shall most heartily desire your Lordship that I may come to the court after your first determination that I may show myself there as I am. Written in haste. Your assured friend to my little power. Elizabeth."

Elizabeth was not allowed to visit the court on this indelicate errand. But she refused to abandon the subject. She insisted that the Privy Council should issue a proclamation denying the slanderous report about her, and not until they did did she let the matter drop. The Princess was fifteen years old at the time without a single adult at her side to counsel and advise her. Her idea of appearing in her own behalf at court was bold and in keeping with her character. The proclamation with which she had to content herself was also a testimonial to her power. Even if it did not have the desired effect in hushing up the scandal, it showed

that the Princess could gain her point in a contest with grown-up men. The episode throws a strong light on her future career. At many stages of her life she was the same precocious, competent girl again, applying the same methods which at fifteen years of age she had already matured.

At first Elizabeth did not believe that the Admiral's life was in danger. She had known the Seymour brothers in their early harmonious days and probably did not realize the fatal rift that had come between them. But when she heard that Sir Thomas's property had been confiscated, she knew that this could only mean one thing. It was then, says Tyrwhitt, her sharp-eyed jailer, that "her spirit began to droop" and she became silent. She had previously been quick, at every mention of Kate Ashley's name, to spring to her defence, but now she lost her lust for battle and quietly let the occasion pass. By this passivity alone did she pay tribute to the tragedy of her unfortunate friend.

When Seymour was finally executed, Elizabeth said — so tradition iterates — "This day died a man with much wit and little judgment."

She may have uttered these words, for her self-control was superhuman, but they did not express her true feelings. She was not callous nor cold-blooded where this man was concerned, but she was in peril of her life and circumspect. At what a cost her attitude of indifference was assumed and maintained is shown by the mysterious illness which was due to de-

pression, and which struck her down afterwards and lasted about four years. In the earlier part of her sickness, it was believed at court that her life was in danger.

Hidden away at Hatfield, she went through her ordeal. Thomas Parry, forgiven and reinstated, acted as her secretary. It was not in the disposition of Elizabeth, at that or any other time, to take revenge on human nature for being human nature. Parry had been jealous of the Admiral, and he certainly lost nothing by the other man's downfall. Even if he had destroyed him by some murderous slip of the tongue, Elizabeth was not one who would fail to see the implied compliment to herself in his behaviour, whatever view she otherwise took of it.

"I had forgotten to say to you," wrote Parry as her secretary, "that her Grace commanded me to say to you, for the excuse of her hand, that it is not now so good as she trusts it shall be; her Grace's unhealth hath made it weaker, and so unsteady, and that is the cause." Through all these trying, suffering years, she leaned hard on the cofferer, and also on Kate Ashley, who had been likewise returned to her.

But the rash, ill-fated Sir Thomas was far from forgotten. In a sense the Princess was married to his ghost. All that she was henceforth to say and do, as a queen and as a woman, was influenced by this happening in her adolescent years. Seymour was the father of her unborn character. Many of his traits had

become her own. She had run great risks with him and had shared his dangers, but she had survived them, while he had perished. In her heart, strong woman that she was, she must have felt some scorn for the weakness which ruined him. Schemes which had destroyed him, ideas and plans accounted in him as so many crimes, were to become great national policies in her reign. Charges which had brought him to the scaffold made her one of the greatest sovereigns of all time. At many stages of her life she must have realized with joy that she had vindicated him.

Chapter IV

SAINT ELIZABETH

I

After Seymour's death, Elizabeth lived in seclusion at Hatfield. The ancient manor-house with its gardens and live oaks had always been her favourite residence. She had survived her mother's death in its nursery and she was also here when the news of the Admiral's death reached her. Within its sheltering grey walls she concealed her subsequent disgrace and suffering. Probably it was pity which caused her brother Edward to make over the place to her and the Lord Protector to unloose her property. She was her own mistress at the age of seventeen.

Not until her brother died, three years later, did she emerge from her cloistered retirement. Having successfully evaded the Protestant uprising, she arrived in London on the same day as Mary to pay her respects to the Queen. Glorying in a clear conscience and a stately retinue, Elizabeth rode into London beside her sister, their horses keeping step through the winding streets. Mary, who was naturally generous, divided the applause with her, but she probably did not realize the significance of this ride nor its triumphant meaning for Elizabeth. The Princess had the gift of pleasing the public and already knew it. On this occasion she made the most of her opportunities and outshone the Queen, who was almost old enough to be her mother and looked every day of her age. The nineteen-year-old Princess was youthful and beautiful by contrast. She charmed the people, who preferred to look at her instead of the Queen.

But Mary's amiability had its limits, as Elizabeth soon learned to her cost. Her brief appearance as Queen Mary's sister had not made her enemies more lenient. It was decided that Elizabeth must go to mass, and go to mass she did on the 8th day of September, the birthday of the Virgin Mary. Two days previously, she had still been recalcitrant. The French Ambassador noted her rebelliousness with joy on behalf of his own candidate, Princess Mary Stuart. But something caused Elizabeth to change her mind, for on the 7th of September, her twentieth birthday,

she capitulated. No sooner had she given in than she fell very ill with a kind of cramps. Her sickness lasted all night and into the next day, and even on her way to the chapel she still moaned as if in great pain. Her enemies were, however, not satisfied yet, and Mary, prodded thereto by the Spanish Ambassador, asked her explicitly whether she had gone to mass from policy or conscience. Trembling perceptibly in every limb, Elizabeth replied that she had gone from conscience.

On Mary's coronation day, her sky had cleared again. Mary had simple, natural affections and, when left to herself, followed them instinctively. She used her royal powers to hold a family reunion. On the way to Westminster, Elizabeth rode in a carriage behind the Queen's in company with the Lady Anne of Cleves, her father's only surviving consort, and one whom Elizabeth especially liked. She dined with the Queen and the dowager Lady Anne, the two royal sisters often appearing hand in hand. But this atmosphere of good feeling was again interrupted by the machinations of religious prejudice. The Queen knew well, and if she did not know, there were plenty to remind her, that Elizabeth was of the same faith as the luckless usurper, Lady Jane Grey, who was even then in the Tower, and waiting judgment. It was not the intention of the Spanish party that the religious divisions within this family should be forgotten and wiped out. The successors of Chapuys who had

hounded Anne Boleyn to her death were not going to sit by calmly while her daughter enjoyed religious freedom at Queen Mary's court.

Elizabeth soon found this out. The final blow to her pride was struck when her old rival Margaret Douglas, the Countess of Lennox, was given precedence over her at court. Frances Brandon, the mother of the traitorous Lady Jane, was likewise allowed to pass before her in the throne-room. There was nothing left for Princess Elizabeth but to retire to her room, which she did accordingly. But the Queen converted her voluntary retreat into a form of imprisonment by forbidding the members of the court to resort to her. Piling Pelion upon Ossa, the Queen next proceeded to make her own birth legitimate by an act of Parliament but to make no alteration in her sister's status, however. Elizabeth promptly threw herself at Mary's feet and asked permission to withdraw from court. She was offended, incensed, but she was also incapable of living in an environment where she was not supreme. She was already too much accustomed to being the monarch of her realm.

II

Without doubt Elizabeth's hopes regarding the succession had declined since her first coming up to London. She had taken Mary's spinsterhood for granted, but Parliament had not done so. They urged the faded

woman to take a husband and Mary, who only a few months since had been old and sick and weary, responded hopefully. The councillors had even picked out a husband for her, an English nobleman by the name of Edward Courtenay. He had grown up in the Tower, having been sent there in his boyhood, and was now suddenly released to be the tool of rival interests in the forthcoming crisis. But Mary did not want him. She had fixed her hopes on her Spanish cousin, a stately widower of twenty-six, and Charles the Fifth had decided that Mary should have his son.

The English were distracted. An English Catholic was one thing, but a Spanish Catholic was something quite different. A parliamentary committee waited on the Queen and besought her to marry a countryman. But Mary was indignant and refused to listen to them. Queen though she might be, she insisted that she had the right of any common woman to choose her own husband. She longed to have a child of her own and give England an heir, but as for marrying an Englishman, she would not hear of it. When the gentlemen of the committee came to that part of their petition, she suddenly sat down in her chair as if too tired to stand.

She wrestled with her problem until she fell ill. At last she sent for the Spanish ambassador and pledged herself secretly to the Prince of Spain. With her uncanny preference for midnight hours and holy practices, she went through a vicarious betrothal by candlelight in her chapel. Before the shining altar she

promised her future husband that "she would never change, but would love him perfectly, and that she would never give him any cause to be jealous." The worldly-minded Spanish envoy, who was present, exchanged glances with the Catholic lady-in-waiting. With difficulty they contained themselves from expressing their exultation.

The ensuing engagement, which Mary looked upon as a binding marriage, had been announced. England rocked and the reaction came. All too promptly the Protestant rebellion broke out. A company of young hot-bloods besieged Mary in her palace and were cut down for their pains. Their leader, Thomas Wyatt, whose name stamped the uprising, was hustled to the Tower, and Mary, breathing fire, sat down at her writing-table to sign death-warrants.

For two weeks Tower Hill ran blood. The Queen sent Thomas Wyatt and the Duke of Suffolk, Lady Jane Grey's father, to the block. The guileless Lady Jane, with whom Mary had once shared her jewels and other feminine treasures, was suddenly set upon within her Tower apartment and murdered in cold blood. Her innocent boy-husband, Guilford Dudley, was slaughtered at the same time. And still the frenzied Queen would not desist. With the Spanish envoy always at her elbow pointing out that Philip would not come to England as long as she spared his enemies, she did not dare to leave off. Once more she seized her pen and wrote a letter to her sister Elizabeth. It was

friendly enough in outward form, but it summoned her peremptorily to come at once to court.

III

When Elizabeth had retired from court life to the country, it had cost her on the whole no painful sacrifice. She was accustomed to country life and studious occupations and she could amuse herself in solitude though she did not especially like it. She preferred to have a companion in her studies and sometimes changed her interests to suit those of her companion. When Roger Ascham, for instance, was living at Hatfield, she read Sophocles and Cicero. But when her steward, Thomas Parry, returned home a little later, she turned her attention to the keeping of her account books. Between her eighteenth and nineteenth years she took a great interest in her income and outgo and checked up every shilling. As Queen, she kept a staff of secretaries, employing a different one for every department of her affairs and having always one of them close by her side.

Her sister Mary's letter found her engaged in a new study. At Ashridge, whither she had retreated with her rosaries and crosses, she had set up an altar to her new gods. It was characteristic of her that she assumed the attitude of a student rather than a worshipper and insisted that she needed education in the faith. She wrote to her sister and Charles the Fifth asking for the

proper furniture for her chapel, as one might do who was sadly in ignorance, but well-intentioned. It may be noted, however, that she did not ask for a Catholic priest to be sent to her as tutor. In this branch of her education she was content to puzzle things out for herself, or with the aid of such fellow converts as the steward, Thomas Parry, and the Lord Protector's former secretary, William Cecil. Nevertheless, she had conformed and went to mass, and so her sister's letter fell like a thunderbolt.

What Elizabeth knew about Wyatt's rebellion has never been discovered and probably never will be. Since the whole scheme, however, turned on her marriage to Edward Courtenay and their elevation to the throne in place of Mary and Philip, it was naturally supposed that she shared in the plot. The French Ambassador, who was a prime mover of the scheme, wrote to his King: "From what I hear, it only requires that Lord Courtenay should marry her, that they should go together to the counties of Devonshire and Cornwall. . . . There are many of whom I know who would be ready to give him encouragement and all help in carrying out some plan to his advantage, and I do not see what should hinder him, except his weakness, faint-heartedness, and timidity, since the disgrace of the Princess." These words would indicate no great degree of acquaintanceship between the writer and the disgraced Princess. Even a slight contact with her would have taken away his cocksureness

regarding Courtenay's chances. One of the chief conspirators, therefore, had apparently never met Elizabeth nor had any personal dealings with her.

In the mean time the Queen had sent the unfortunate Courtenay back to his Tower, and she now dispatched a guard of gentlemen to fetch her sister from the country. Elizabeth must have wished a thousand times that she had never left the court. In her terror she fell genuinely ill, too ill by far to travel, and the escort sent to fetch her so reported. Queen Mary responded, politely but grimly, by sending her own physicians to Elizabeth's aid. They also said the Princess was ill. But the Queen was resourceful. She sent her own litter, drawn by twenty-nine Spanish mules, to bear the invalid in comfort and safety to the city. Elizabeth's state of mind and body was by this time pitiable. She fainted repeatedly as they were placing her in the litter and was barely conscious when the cavalcade set forth. It was the day on which, as she had probably heard, Lady Jane Grey was to be executed.

The chief of the gentlemen in charge of Elizabeth was her great-uncle, Lord William Howard. The two physicians were friendly and one of them was a good deal of a diplomat. The ailing Princess herself was a skilful fencer. To these circumstances may be attributed the fact that the procession made a very slow and halting progress to London. They journeyed only six or seven miles a day and came to a dead stop at

Highgate. It was reported at court that the invalid Princess, swollen and disfigured, was at the point of death. Nevertheless, when the party arrived in London a week later, Elizabeth sat up in the litter and put back the curtains so that the people might see her. Perhaps she vaguely hoped that some help might come from them. But not a sound broke from the gazing multitude, for the people had learned to look on in silent wonderment while the Tudor family murdered each other. Chalk-white and proud — "disdainful," it was said — Elizabeth passed by them on that dreadful day.

When the procession stopped at Whitehall instead of the Tower, the Princess must have been inexpressibly relieved. She was lodged in an upper apartment, immediately above the kitchen of the Countess of Lennox. The noise of the pots and kettles and of the heavy logs as they were cast on the fire annoyed the sick woman excessively and her waiting-women were very indignant on her account. But, after all, this hardship was a trifle in comparison with what was to follow. Shortly before Easter the Earl of Sussex and the Marquis of Winchester waited on Elizabeth and informed her that she was to be transferred to the Tower.

In great agony of mind the Princess asked permission to see her sister. But the lords told her that she had no time; she was to go at once. The barge was waiting at the water-gate, and the tide, which

proverbially tarried for no man, was at the moment favourable. At this intelligence Elizabeth renewed her plea, and begged so earnestly that the Earl of Sussex, who was a simple, honest man, at last consented to take a letter to Queen Mary. Elizabeth immediately sat down and wrote it. For once she had no taste for the conceits and metaphors which usually adorned her style and obscured her meaning. It was the most straightforward writing that the Princess ever did, yet it took her a long while to finish it. When she had signed her name with her usual flourishes, the tide had long since turned and the barge hung useless at its moorings.

"If ever any did try this old saying," she wrote in her large, firm handwriting, "that a King's word was more than another man's oath, I must humbly beseech your Majesty to verify it in me, and to remember your last promise and my last demand that I be not condemned without answer and due proof; which it seems that now I am; for without cause proved, I am by your Council from you commanded to go into the Tower, a place more wanted for a false traitor than a true subject; which though I know I deserve it not, yet in the face of all this realm appears that it is proved. I pray God I may die the shamefullest death that ever any did, afore I may mean any such thing; and to this present hour I protest afore God (who shall judge my truth, whatsoever malice shall devise) that I never practised, counselled, nor consented to

anything which might be prejudicial to your person in any way, or dangerous to the State by any means. And therefore I humbly beseech your Majesty to let me answer afore yourself and not suffer me to trust to your councillors; yea, and that afore I go to the Tower (if it be possible); if not, afore I be further condemned; howbeit, I trust assuredly your Highness will give me leave to do it afore I go, for that thus shamefully I may not be cried out on as I now shall be, yea, and without cause; let conscience move your Highness to take some better way with me than to make me be condemned in all men's sight afore my known desert. Also I most humbly beseech your Highness to pardon this my boldness, which my innocency procures me to do, together with hope of your natural kindness, which I trust will not see me cast away without desert, which what it is I would desire no more of God but that you truly knew. Which thing I think and believe you shall never by report know, unless by yourself you hear. I have heard in my time of many cast away, for want of coming to the presence of their prince; and in late days I heard my Lord of Somerset say that if his brother had been suffered to speak with him he had never suffered, but persuasions were made to him so great that he was brought in belief that he could not live safely if the Admiral lived; and that made him give his consent to his death. Though these persons are not to be compared to your Majesty, yet I pray God that evil persuasions persuade not one

sister against the other, and all for that they have heard false report, and not hearken to the truth known. Therefore, once again kneeling with humbleness of my heart, because I am not suffered to bow the knees of my body, I humbly crave to speak with your Highness, which I would not be so bold as to desire if I knew not myself most clear, as I knew myself most true. And as for the traitor Wyatt, he might peradventure write me a letter, but on my faith I never received any from him. And as for the copy of my letter sent to the French King, I pray God confound me eternally if ever I sent him word, message, token, or letter, by any means. And to this truth I will stand in to my death. I humbly crave but only one word of answer from yourself. Your Highness's most faithful subject, that hath been from the beginning and will be to my end. Elizabeth."

But the delay was all that the Princess gained. Perhaps it was all that she hoped to gain, for she had already learned to appreciate its value. From first to last, delay was Elizabeth's trump card.

Two days later, on a rainy, dismal Palm Sunday, the lords came for her again and she was this time obliged to go with them. The barge passed up the river, under the bridge, on past the main entrance to the Tower, and stopped at the Traitors' Gate. Forced to debark at this ominous portal, the Princess exclaimed: "Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs. Before thee, O

God, I speak it, having no other friend but thee alone." A gentleman urged her sharply to go on. She sat down on a reeking stone, her back to the gateway. Another gentleman pressed her more kindly to pass inside out of the inclement weather. But she could not bring herself to enter the terrifying fortress. Finally one of her own servants burst out weeping and Elizabeth, summoning courage by chiding him, rose and climbed the dreaded stairs. The huge Traitors' Gate closed behind her as she went.

IV

The Princess was lodged in the so-called Bell Tower, which had a precipitous wall on the side toward the river and whose only outlet was on the green where Anne Boleyn had been executed. Her remains and those of Admiral Seymour lay in the adjacent church.

A number of Elizabeth's people stayed with her. Among them was Sir John Harington, who had been one of Seymour's servants, and had married one of Elizabeth's women. "My wife," he said loyally, "is her [Elizabeth's] servant, and doth but rejoice in this our misery, when we look with whom we are holden in bondage." Other of her retainers took lodgings just outside the Tower walls, where at the Princess's expense they prepared her meals to be sent in to her. A skirmish ensued at once between them and the soldiers at the gateway who were supposed to receive

the dishes and carry them to the Princess. As usual, Elizabeth's cohorts won. Her cup-bearer and her carver marched triumphantly past all obstacles and served their mistress *in propria persona*. The name of the general who won the battle does not appear in history, but circumstances indicate that the conqueror was her steward.

The Tower was full of prisoners. Edward Courtenay dwelt in the Bell Tower, as did the Princess. Those members of the Dudley family who had not perished with Lady Jane Grey were still in an adjacent dungeon, wearily carving their names on its walls. Thus the Princess was within a stone's throw of her alleged confederate, Courtenay, and the still obscure Robert Dudley, whose future life was to be so notoriously linked with hers. She was suspected by the Council of being in communication with Courtenay, and a child of four that lived in the Tower was supposed to be their messenger. The child was dragged before the lords and catechized. But again the Princess appeared to have no traffic with Lord Courtenay. The person with whom she really communicated was her neighbour Robert Dudley, the future Earl of Leicester. According to a contemporary source which was friendly to his family, Elizabeth obtained money from young Dudley at this time and he actually sold property to procure it for her. How much she borrowed and whether she ever paid it back, are not stated. Presumably it was no small amount. If it cost Sir John

Harington a thousand pounds, as he afterwards said, to get himself out of the Tower, it must have cost his mistress the Princess, next heir to the English throne, a vastly greater sum. And as for ever paying the money back, angel for angel, pound for pound, that was something that Elizabeth never did, at least not to the Earl of Leicester. Even at that early date he began to spend his own money on the enterprises of the Queen, a custom which he ever afterwards kept up.

Elizabeth remained in the Tower two months. She was not gratuitously ill-used. Some of her favourite servants, being sterner Protestants than herself, refused to hear mass and were removed. Such partings were painful for the Princess, who was loyal to her domestics. Her own personal ordeals she survived with triumph. She had already proved her ability to stand cross-questioning and that to which she was now subjected was possibly no worse than her experiences of five years previously. At any rate, she bore the onslaught without flinching and earned the usual reward of intrepidity. The ancient Earl of Arundel fell upon his knees, in humble apology. "Your Grace saith true," he uttered, "and certainly we are very sorry that we have troubled you about so vain matters." Like the Earl of Sussex, who took her letter to the Queen, he had succumbed to her spell and even more unconditionally. Elizabeth had now won two powerful friends at court.

Nevertheless she almost lost her life through a

momentary mischance. The Queen had fallen ill and her Catholic Chancellor was terrified out of his wits at the thought of her sudden death and her sister's accession. In desperation he sent off an order for Elizabeth's execution, but he did not dare to forge the Queen's signature. It was a time-worn trick which sometimes worked. On this occasion, however, it failed, for the Constable refused to honour the unsigned document. By such a narrow margin was Elizabeth's life saved.

It was the turning-point in her misfortunes. Her enemies had overshot their mark. Mary was extremely irate when she heard of it and resolved to take steps for the preservation of her sister's life. Among other things she decided to remove her at once from the Tower.

V

All unconscious of the danger which she had narrowly escaped, Elizabeth was terrified at the changes which she saw around her. A tall, serious knight, Sir Henry Bedingfield, appeared with a company of men in the courtyard of the Tower. Elizabeth at once asked breathlessly whether Lady Jane Grey's scaffold had been removed. Hardly had she been reassured on this point when she was requested to make ready to leave the Tower. The mysterious orders frightened her still more and she inquired of someone whether

Sir Henry "were a person who made a conscience of murder, if such an order were entrusted to him."

Without knowledge of her destination she set forth, at first on a barge up the river as far as Richmond, where she slept the first night. The next night the party arrived at Windsor, where signs already began to appear that the Princess was herself again. To the great annoyance of Sir Henry, who had no idea how much authority to use, she declined to sleep in the room provided for her and wandered capriciously about the great stone building, considering this and rejecting that. From this time forth, to the end of their journey, she harassed the poor knight consistently.

A few miles beyond Oxford they paused at the ancient seat called Woodstock. It was a place of romantic legend, the abode of that fair frail Rosamond whom Henry the Second had loved. The manor-house, which had long been neglected, was in a bad state of repair. The gatehouse, where Elizabeth was established, was a little better off, although the roofs were leaky and there were no locks or bolts on the doors. Sir Henry wrote pathetically to London asking for repairs, but the Council could not be moved to spend money on the upkeep of the place. The Princess's imprisonment had hitherto been conducted and continued to be conducted on an economical plan. She paid all of the expenses, including those of the soldiers and the knight who guarded her. It placed Sir Henry Bedingfield in an embarrassing position.

He had to cope with the astute Parry. The steward took up his residence in an inn near the gatehouse and coolly proceeded to allowance the whole household according to his judgment. Bedingfield objected to some of his arrangements, but Parry held the purse-strings and won. The Council sent down word that Parry was to leave instantly. The steward promised to remove himself, but did not budge, and again the perplexed knight forbore to compel him. With the Privy Council, however threatening, so far off in the distance and forty soldiers on his hands to be fed and controlled, he probably did not see how he could get along without the steward's assistance. He wrote constantly to London asking to be relieved, but the Council was well satisfied with his service and paid no heed to him.

The truth was that her imprisonment at Woodstock was Elizabeth's salvation at this crucial time. The fires of Smithfield were raging fiercely and her sister Mary was busy earning for herself the formidable title which still clings to her name. The Princess was too much of a Protestant to have been at large at this period without danger to herself. She must have realized as much when she sent alms to Latimer and Ridley, soon to be burned at the stake within eight miles of her door. Even Mary, in the midst of her insane outbreak, must have calculated that her sister, as the prisoner of Woodstock, was protected by that circumstance from a possibly much worse fate.

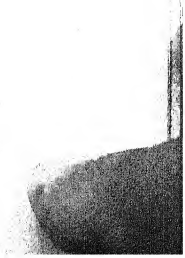
Nevertheless Elizabeth's proud spirit could not endure captivity with patience. She bombarded the Queen with messages until Mary sent her word that she wished to receive no more of her "disguised and colourable letters." Then Elizabeth, whose feelings were a little hurt, fell silent. She grew ill, very ill, and asked for physicians, but she would not be attended by those that were sent down because they were strangers. She had need of all her patience. "I walk many times," she wrote on the fly-leaf of her prayer-book, "into the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodlisome herbes of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, chew them by musing, and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory, by gathering them together, that so having tasted their sweetness I may the less perceive the bitterness of this miserable life."

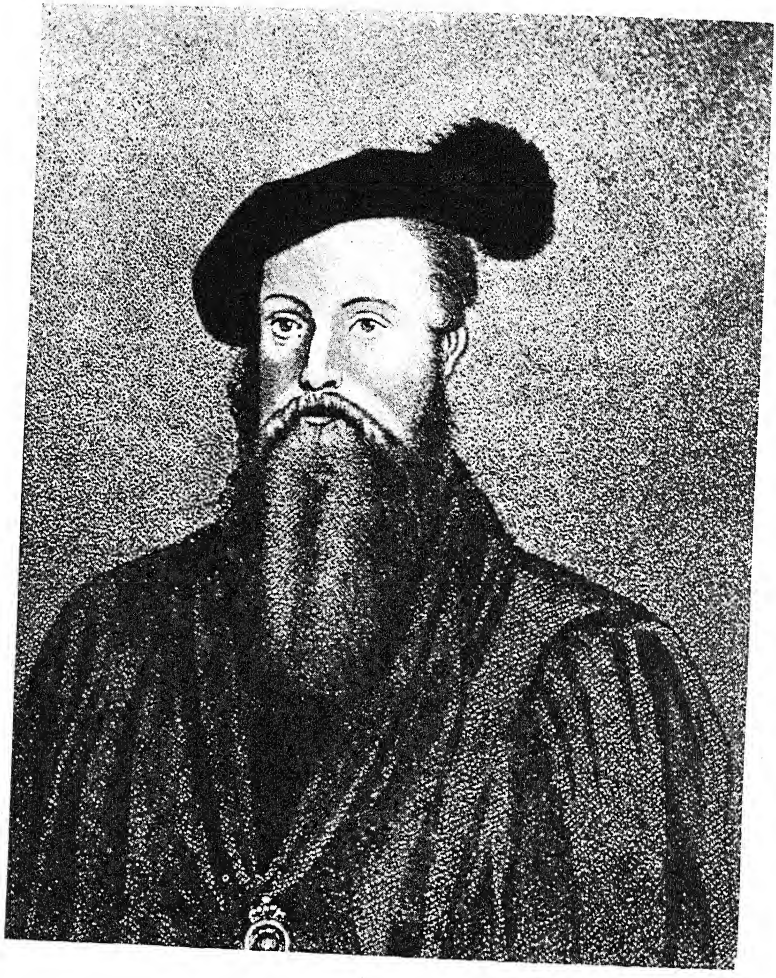
Just when she finally left Woodstock is not exactly recorded. But in October 1555, she seems to have been again at Hatfield. Aid had come to her from an unexpected source. The much-tried Bedingfield at last saw that he and his royal charge were yoked together, for better or worse. He could not be released until she was. It was he therefore who at Elizabeth's instance asked and obtained permission for the Princess to write to her sister again. Joyfully he brought the news to Elizabeth and joyfully he sent her ink and paper for the task. But nine days passed tediously and the Princess still did not write. The poor man

was dejected. She made signs of beginning a letter and then stopped again. She had had a headache, so the anxious Sir Henry learned from one of her ladies-in-waiting. In the afternoon she washed her hair.

Then Elizabeth sent for him. "Do you act as my secretary," she said. "I am not suffered at this time to have one, therefore you must needs do it." The document which she then dictated was sent to London by a messenger supplied by Thomas Parry. Not long afterwards Bedingfield received order to bring his captive to Hampton Court for a visit. "The discharge of this my service," he replied to the Council, "were the joyfullest tidings that ever came to me, as Our Lord Almighty knows."

Another friend, a new arrival at court, had helped Elizabeth in this crisis. This was no less a person than the magnificent and influential Philip of Spain, her new brother-in-law. The tragedy of his English marriage is well known. Perceiving that his wife would have no child and snubbed on every side by her inhospitable countrymen, Philip had soon grown sick of his bargain. In the solitude of Hampton Court, the disillusioned adventurer began to plan the details of an immediate escape. The people who had opposed his marriage to Mary began to look more sensible to him than they had formerly and he advised the Queen to release them from the Tower. Among those thus restored to liberty was Elizabeth's champion, Sir Robert Dudley. Even the Princess Elizabeth no





SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR. From *Annals of the Seymour Family*

longer appeared in the guise of the Protestant witch that he had been brought up to believe her. The madwoman whom he had married, for Mary's reason was fast succumbing to sadness and disappointment, insisted on still believing that she was pregnant, long after the physicians had said that it was impossible. Philip wished only to escape his share of the responsibility, and the only way that he could see was to substitute Elizabeth in place of his heir. So when Elizabeth's pleading letter came, he advised the Queen to have her brought to Hampton Court. Philip has justly received credit for the subsequent reconciliation between the sisters.

The nocturnal meeting between them was a dramatic episode. At ten in the evening by Anne Boleyn's clock, in the Hampton Court tower, the Queen sent for Elizabeth, and Bedingfield escorted her with a lighted torch. Along the galleries and through the courtyard Elizabeth passed with her sombre guard to meet her sister. They faced each other like judge and accused. Elizabeth fell on her knees and protested her loyalty. The Queen tried to extract from her some admission of her fault, but Elizabeth would confess to none. "I am and ever have been," she said, "your Majesty's faithful servant." Mary listened to her and turned away, muttering in Spanish: "God knoweth."

The meeting between Philip and Elizabeth was not similarly pictured. But we know that an interview took place and that Mary advised her sister to lay

aside her plain attire and adorn herself suitably for the occasion. Perhaps they met in Elizabeth's apartment, for the Princess had been quartered in the Duke of Alva's former rooms, which were near those of Philip. Whether Elizabeth took her sister's advice about her dress or not, she had her own resources and knew how to use them. Philip was won as surely as had ever been the Earls of Sussex and Arundel. From this time on he urged his wife to make Elizabeth her heir. To Mary's credit it must be said that she had always kept that possibility open.

Chapter V

LEICESTER

I

Old and broken before her time, Mary Tudor died on the 17th of November 1558. Within the stone walls of St. James's Palace, so much like a vast Welsh cottage, she breathed her last. "*Miserere nobis. Miserere nobis,*" she murmured. "*Dona nobis pacem.*"

Elizabeth was at Hatfield. When the news first came to her she did not believe it. So much trickery and subterfuge had surrounded her father's and brother's end that she feared a coup of a similar sort in connection with her sister's. A certain black ring which Mary always wore in memory of the faithless Philip came

to her mind and she sent a messenger to fetch it. When that token lay in her hand, she knew that her half-sister was no longer living. She could credit the official tidings when they were delivered to her. Like Mary's last words, her first words were Latin. "*A Domino factum est istud,*" she said, standing, like a priestess, beneath an English oak, "*et est mirabile oculis nostris.*"

If Elizabeth was ever beautiful, it was at the time of her accession. We gather this from contemporary descriptions, for there are no portraits of her at this age and almost none previously. She had been rather overlooked in this regard, in favour of her brother Edward, her father's wives, and even her sister Mary. It was almost as if her father, with Holbein at his daily service, had deliberately tried to forget her existence. A brief radiance fell on her retired girlhood through Katharine Parr, but vanished with that lady's untimely death and the public disgrace of the Princess. Again Elizabeth disappeared from the royal foreground, and, robed in her nun's habit, was, for the time being, quite willing to remain forgotten. There are not even any word portraits of this later period.

On the day when she stood under the English oak and spoke in Latin, she was just twenty-five. Her hair was yellowish-red, presumably of the same colour as the wigs that she wore later. Her skin was dead white. Her eyes were set deep in their sockets and their glance was like Anne Boleyn's, direct and aggressive. Rather

tall than otherwise, she always stood at her full height, and this, together with her steady gaze, gave her a commanding presence.

Authority rather than dignity characterized her manner. She spat and swore like a man; in other words, like the departed Admiral Seymour, who had learned his manners in rough places. From the moment that she became Queen, she abandoned her nun's habit and came forth like a butterfly bursting from a cocoon. Rings, fans, jewellery, and combs, embroidery, pearls, veils, and laces garnished her daily attire. She passed at once from one extreme to the other. Seven years of sackcloth and ashes had sufficed for a lifetime. Henceforth she acted apparently on the belief that it was not possible for a queen to be overdressed. She garbed herself in splendour and revelled in a plenteous wardrobe.

Her coronation was a social début magnified. It took place on the 15th of January 1559. On entering the Tower previously, Elizabeth said piously "Some have fallen from being princes of this land, to be prisoners in this place; I am raised from being prisoner in this place to be prince of this land." She slept in the so-called Queen's apartment, where Anne Boleyn had slept before her coronation and had endured the long night-watches before her execution. For the first time since that horror, the memory of the dead woman was invoked with public honours. Her portrait hung over Gracechurch Street, side by side with Henry the Eighth's, and her name, so long unmentioned, was

painted in large bold letters beside her royal consort's. There must have been many in the English throng who remembered the awful day and the sound of the terrible guns that announced her passing. Memories also of the way in which they had glowered at her on her coronation day may have awakened some contrition in the crowd which now cheered her daughter. They had grumbled at "Nan Bullen," but they had never intended that she should be beheaded. Now they were quite sincerely glad to pay homage to her daughter.

At every step the progress was a triumph, and the new Queen was well qualified to grace it. As she passed along the rush-strewn highways, nothing escaped her notice. No tribute, however trivial, failed of appreciation. "I remember old Harry the Eighth," said someone in the crowd, and the Queen, overhearing the words, smiled happily for several minutes. An old woman tossed a sprig of rosemary upon her lap and she kept the bit of herb in her hand as if it were something precious. Half-way to Westminster they passed by a man who was weeping. The nobleman who bore a corner of her canopy observed him and pointed him out to the Queen. "Yonder is an alderman," he said, "which weepeth and averteth his face." "I warrant it is for joy," said the Queen quickly. She would have no cloud in her sky this day.

Already at Hatfield she had begun to name her councillors. Sir William Cecil, who had been employed

by the Seymours, was appointed Secretary of State with a promptness which showed that he had long since been her choice. He was sworn in simultaneously with Thomas Parry, the cofferer, who was knighted at the same time and given the controllership. Elizabeth's words to Cecil have been preserved. "I give you this charge," she said, "that you shall be of my Privy Council, and content yourself to take pains for me and my realm. This judgment I have of you, that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift, and that you will be faithful to the State; and that, without respect to my private will, you will give me that counsel which you think best, and if you shall know anything necessary to be declared to me of secrecy, you shall show it to myself only, and assure yourself I will not fail to keep taciturnity therein, and therefore herewith I charge you."

The end of her address might have been more properly directed to Parry, the Controller, for he had long been a secret agent of Elizabeth's and continued now in this discreet capacity. "Her present Controller and Secretary Cecil govern the Kingdom," wrote de Feria to Philip.

Certainly the new Queen's conduct gave grounds for his statement. Her flirtation with Robert Dudley, her Master of the Horse, seemed to be her prime interest. She wore him like a feather in her cap, for purposes of show, and could not spare him for such uses as her Controller and her Secretary were content to

subserve. Dudley's gallantry and good looks, which were patent to all the world, flattered her enormously. She dressed herself like a peacock to keep pace with him, for she always appeared in public with her Master of the Horse. He rode next to her when she entered London, a red-haired, erect figure in purple velvet, on the day of her coronation, his horse pacing close beside her crimson, low-hung carriage. His gallantry and attentiveness were expansive, spectacular; but de Feria, the Spanish Ambassador, did not even see him. If he did, he did not mention him in his letters to Philip. His mind was too much occupied with a marriage between Elizabeth and his master.

II

The new Queen found herself confronted by this inconvenient problem. The marriage question loomed up shortly before her coronation and she barely succeeded in evading it then. Philip and Mary had been obsessed to marry her to the Duke of Savoy and Elizabeth had been so terrified lest they succeed that she had contemplated flight to the continent. It was the one and only time that she ever considered such a retreat. Throughout all her dangers, her sojourn in the Tower, her imprisonment at Woodstock, her exposure to assassination, she had never entertained the thought of leaving her country. Only the threat of being forced into marriage had driven her to the verge

of this extremity. What might have happened to Elizabeth and England if she had taken this step at this time is an interesting subject for speculation, for Mary's death was approaching, and had Elizabeth been absent at that crisis, and in the same country with Mary Queen of Scots, their chances would have been more even. But the Princess, as usual, chose to wait the turn of events, and, as usual, they favoured her.

As soon as she was Queen, she again toyed with marriage. "This woman is possessed of a hundred thousand devils," wrote de Quadra, who had succeeded de Feria, gone home disgusted; "and yet she pretends to me that she would like to be a nun, and live in her cell, and tell her beads from morning until night."

Suitors sprang up like mushrooms. Walsingham is credited with the saying that "she was the best marriage in her parish, and brought a kingdom with her for dowry." The first suitor was the ancient Earl of Arundel, whom Elizabeth had met and conquered in the Tower. Tears of joy flowed from the old man when, on the continent, he heard of her accession. He hastened home and, says the scornful de Feria, his weeping "floated the ship in."

Philip had cold-bloodedly resolved to marry his deceased wife's sister. "I have decided," he wrote solemnly, "to place on one side all other considerations which might be urged against it and am resolved to render this service to God, and offer to marry the



THE EARL OF LEICESTER. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery



Queen of England, and will use every possible effort to carry this through if it can be done on the conditions that will be explained." He still believed, this zealous Catholic King, that Elizabeth could be won for the Pope and the Roman Church. He remembered his former dealings with her in the reign of her sister, but he failed to take into account that this was Elizabeth's reign. The former cofferer, now Elizabeth's Controller, was also unable to grasp the new situation. He thought that his mistress was still obliged to cling to Philip's protection, and he met de Feria in sequestered corners to discuss the proffered marriage. "Although he is not so good a Catholic as he should be," wrote the Ambassador of Parry, "he is the most reasonable of those nearest the Queen." A very powerful person, this obscure accountant, who was for a brief time influential in the affairs of England. But his day was passing. Already he could see his sun setting as his former mistress, the lady of Hatfield, changed into Queen of England. She was gathering new henchmen about her — men who were younger and handsomer and abler. Leicester, who was born on the same day and at the same hour, was closest to her person. Parry increased his efforts to marry Elizabeth to Philip.

The Secretary, Cecil, was busy marshalling the eligible Protestants. The Scotch Earl of Arran was his protégé. With great pains he smuggled him in from France and concealed him in his residence. But

Elizabeth did not even play with the idea of this marriage. It was an old piece of furniture dating back to her father's reign, and Cecil had inherited it with other things from Somerset and refurbished it. His next Protestant suitor, Prince Eric of Sweden, was a more suitable candidate, and the Prince was moreover eager. Elizabeth encouraged him, though rather unkindly, it must be admitted, for she never allowed the courtship to become imminent. It never progressed beyond the stage of correspondence.

The Queen committed herself in no way. When Philip the Second dropped out of the lists, she took his loss complacently. She spoke of his faithlessness to de Feria with "little sighs which bordered upon laughter." She said that His Majesty could not have been so very much in love with her, since he "had not had the patience to wait four months for her." The vastness of Philip's ego had apparently not escaped her and she could not lose the opportunity to prick it a little. Nevertheless she prided herself on Philip's proposal and found in it a vindication of her own attractiveness. She could afford to smile through her sighs. More and more engrossed in the attentions of Robert Dudley, she was, for the second time in her life, risking her reputation. This time, certainly, the risk was all for nothing.

Philip's retirement, however, had not left the field empty of eligible suitors. In the place where he had vanished, two others had sprung up. His poor rela-

tions of Austria, the Archdukes Ferdinand and Charles, were hastily substituted — in fact, so hastily that their sponsors did not have time to choose finally between them. The Queen asked a little quizzically which Archduke she was to marry. The Ambassador, de Quadra, bethought himself hastily and settled on the younger. Thus the Archduke Charles became the official candidate of the Catholic party, and held this position for about ten years.

Elizabeth permitted herself to be captious. She said that his head was too large "like the Earl of Bedford's," and that he was too stodgy for her taste. She told the Ambassador that she could not marry "a man whom she had to feed, and let the world know she had taken a husband who could not afford to keep himself." As the Queen was surrounded by men who owed everything to her, her objection to the Archduke's poverty seemed rather finical. Probably at no time did she ever think of marrying him. Yet she did not wholly give up the idea of marriage, even in her secret heart, although she always said it was for the sake of the Kingdom. She seemed to think that she was perennial, ageless.

Her councillors and statesmen were not so sanguine. The Earl of Sussex, who had felt her powers of fascination, took a physiological view. "I wish not Her Majesty to linger over this matter of so great importance," he said, "but to choose speedily, and therein to follow so much her own affection as that

by the looking upon him whom she should choose, *omnes ejus sensus titillarentur.*" It was hard for him to realize that his charming Queen could go no farther. Cecil urged her on high political grounds to reproduce. Writing to her from Scotland early in her reign, with the dread of the Stuarts already before him, "I will no more molest your majesty," he said, "but use my continual prayer that God would direct your heart to procure a father for your children, and so shall the children of all your realm bless your seed." Even the schoolmaster Ascham felt that he should take some part in the general effort to move her. But he did not himself venture to admonish her. "I wish, my Sturmius," he wrote to a colleague, "that you would call forth all that power which you have derived from the best sources of wisdom and eloquence, whether of reasoning from Demosthenes, or of diction from Cicero, to persuade her to this step." But all their united persuasions — their appeals to the senses, to politics, to the classics — failed to convince her. "Of her own nature," said Ascham, astutely, "without the advice of anyone, she is so entirely averse and abstinent from marriage."

But few observers were as acute as her old schoolmaster. Most people thought that she had given her heart to Dudley and that perhaps she was living with him in secret. The Earl of Sussex, who had vainly tried to negotiate her marriage with the Archduke, finally suggested in desperation that the Queen should

marry her favourite, Dudley. This was after Dudley's wife had died from an accident. At this time, both the Earl of Sussex and the King of Spain would have backed this marriage. Five years after her accession Elizabeth could have married anyone she liked and England would have given him the position of royal consort. But she would not marry her favourite because he was a subject, and she could not marry a foreigner because he was not English.

Dudley, now promoted to be the great Earl of Leicester, finally came to the point where he urged her to marry, if not himself, at least some other person. Following his own characteristic methods, he arranged an elaborate pageant to convince her. Elizabeth attended in the company of the Archduke's representative, who was on hand, as usual, to woo her for his master. As Juno and Diana contended on the stage regarding the advantages of their respective states, the Queen looked on complacently. When Juno seemed to have the best of it, she whispered to her companion: "This is against me." As long as Leicester continued to lay such gorgeous pageants, like great nosegays, at her feet, and the Archduke Charles of Austria continued to kneel there patiently, she was content. Seven years after her accession, she was still undecided.

It is not surprising that fantastic rumours sprang up and gained currency. Not only common gossipmongers, but important persons lent their names to

the most irresponsible statements. Intimate facts, which no human being could possibly have known, were alleged about her. Whispered at first, they were afterwards set down in letters and widely circulated. The friends of the house of Stuart and others with Scotch sympathies were the most credulous and the most active reporters. Mary Stuart herself said on the authority of Lady Shrewsbury that Elizabeth "was not as other women." Ben Jonson wrote to Drummond that the Queen "had a membrane on her which made her incapable of man." He did not add that most women have the same incapacity until they are married. Brantôme, the Frenchman who followed the home-coming train of Mary Queen of Scots, was even more specific. "She was unfit to be a wife," he said of an anonymous lady identified as Elizabeth, "having only the smaller opening through which she passed water." Sir James Melville contented himself with the statement that Elizabeth was "incapable of bearing children." These are the chief sources of the gross legends which, in one form or another, are still circulated about her.

If Elizabeth's councillors had believed her to be thus physically handicapped, it would have saved them a great deal of trouble. No one knew better than they that she was not as other women. No one knew better than they that she was unnatural, that is to say, fascinating, compelling, dæmonic. But they believed with the utmost sincerity that she was capable

of bearing children. That was their grievance. "God will require a sharp account at your hands for the time lost," wrote Cecil bitterly.

Elizabeth's replies to these urgings are not preserved. Presumably she evaded them — she made short shrift with councillors. But Parliament, which held the purse-strings, was not so pliable. It surprised her with the same demand, made formally and in public, and she was obliged to reply directly. In a lengthy and involved address, most of which was words which meant nothing, she rose to the occasion like a true politician.

"Since there can be no duer debt than prince's word," she said, "to keep that unspotted, for my part, as one that would be loath that the self thing that keeps the merchant's credit from craze should be the cause that prince's speech should merit blame, and so their honour quail; an answer therefore I will make, and this it is:

"The two petitions that you presented me, in many words expressed, contained these two things in sum as of your cares the greatest — my marriage and my successor — of which two, the last I think is best to be touched; and of the other a silent thought may serve; for I had thought it had been so desired as none other tree's blossoms should have been minded ere hope of my fruit had been denied you. But to the last, think not that you had needed this desire, if I had seen a time so fit, and it so ripe to be denounced.

The greatness of the cause therefore and need of your returns doth make me say that which the wise may easily guess — that as a short time for so long continuance ought not to pass by rote, as many telleth tales, even so as cause by conference with the learned shall show me matter worthy utterance for your behoof, so shall I more gladly pursue your good after my days, than with my prayers be a means to linger my living thread."

Did she mean that she would rather die than be married? Perhaps something of the kind was in her mind and she was afraid that her hearers might divine it, for presently she launched into the following reassurance:

"And, by the way, if any doubt that I am as it were by vow or determination bent never to trade that life [of marriage], put out that heresy; your belief is awry — for as I think it best for a private woman, so do I strive with myself to think it not most meet for a prince — and if I can bend my will to your need, I will not resist such a mind."

With this half-way promise the Commons were obliged to be satisfied. But Elizabeth would see to it in the future that they should have as few opportunities as possible to inflict such embarrassments. It was her policy throughout her reign to summon Parliament only when a session could not be avoided. She thought that two or three times a decade was enough. She took money from anyone from whom she could

get it and she husbanded her resources to the extreme point of stinginess. Anything was better than to allow the Commons to open this subject along with its purse-strings.

III

Many years ago the beautiful Greek Apollo was worshipped in London. His temple stood among the rushes that bordered the Thames, on the identical spot now covered by Westminster Abbey. In time the Greek deity withdrew before the Virgin, whose oaken images in turn occupied the spot until overthrown by the Reformation. Then, being forms of mere painted wood, they were thrown into the fire by the Protestants. Apollo's stone altars had remained up to date beneath the Catholic Virgin. But the new zealots would not allow even these vestiges to remain. They broke up the ancient altars and put the communion-table in their place. Instead of the beautiful Greek god and the tender Lady, they installed a new ruler of the spirit, more powerful and dominating than any that had gone before. They called the new idol conscience, and those who worshipped it they called Puritans.

The Puritans were the Anglicized descendants of the Lutherans and Calvinists. Whatever the English adopted had first to be Anglicized and so it was with the Reformation. From the beginning it had two

tendencies: one which was almost purely nationalistic, and one which was more strictly religious.

The former was a revolt like the American Revolution in which the Pope and Peter's pence played the part of George the Third and the English tea-tax. Taxation without representation was the grievance underlying both. The Pope ruled over England, and no Englishman, save one, had ever been elected Pope. Henry the Eighth and Wolsey had resented this, and Henry had inaugurated the final break with Rome. The Church of England was his Declaration of Independence. But he was still too much of a Catholic to conceive of a Church without a personal head. So Henry himself became its head.

Simultaneously with its growth ran the strain of the new religious spirit. Anne Boleyn, it might be said, was the head of these reformers. The tendency had its origin in the teachings of foreigners, but it refused to adopt their names or acknowledge their leadership. The Puritans were as English as was the Church of England, and on this common ground they stood firm and united. Even the English Catholics had too much national spirit to be good Romanists.

Queen Elizabeth inclined to her father's way of believing. In childhood she had been bred a Puritan, but long years under her sister Mary had brought her near the Catholics. But she was English, "mere English," as she said, and her Church had to be English. If the Pope could have forgone the Latin

services, he might have won Elizabeth and England for the Catholic Church. Latin was a fetish which the English poets — men who had nothing to do with the Church — had destroyed once for all in England. She was herself an industrious translator into English. The mystery of the Roman word was gone for ever in England, for the people had created a new popular language, the glory of which rested like a crown on every man that spoke it.

One of Elizabeth's first acts as queen was to order the Church service read in this language. The Book of Common Prayer, the Articles of Faith, and the Bible were restored to the people in the versions in which her brother and the Lord Protector had preserved them. She restored, however, certain Catholic items which her brother had eliminated; if they contradicted the context, the Queen could not help it. She was not interested in religious controversy. But she was interested in the English tongue and in the English wild-flowers. She brought the one into the churches and the other into the palaces. She decorated her banquet halls with hawthorne and marigold. The great English cathedrals no longer echoed to the tongue of the Cæsars, but to a language which Robin Hood and Kate Ashley could speak and understand. It was a momentous change, as vital as the substitution of the communion-table for the altar, and even more irrevocable. Once established, it made all further changes — changes of doctrine, changes of

ritual — almost unimportant. The language conserved the Church as Elizabeth established it.

What did Queen Elizabeth believe? As the first great Protestant ruler of Europe, she was very noncommittal on this essential point. She never wrote a creed. The author of so many prayers, she never wrote out a statement of her faith. Her actions do not help us answer the question. She was crowned with Catholic ceremonies, although she refused to attend mass. She submitted to be anointed, though she afterwards spoke disrespectfully of the sacred oil. It "was grease and smelled ill," she said. All her life long she kept candles on her altar and a crucifix in her chapel, although she ostentatiously forbade the pictures of saints in prayer-books.

A Protestant by birth, training, and vocation, she nevertheless insisted on keeping her bishops unmarried. But like Luther her prelates refused to be celibates. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury was married, a lack of dignity, in her eyes, for which Elizabeth could never forgive him. Dr. Parker, the incumbent, had been her mother's chaplain and Elizabeth by appointing him had followed her example. She wanted the Archbishop to abstain voluntarily from wedlock, as she had done, and thus help her to atone for poor Anne's alleged crimes. But the Archbishop of Canterbury preferred not to renounce his privileges. Elizabeth could never bring herself to recognize his wife. "Madam I may not call you," she

said on one occasion, " mistress I am ashamed to call you, and so I know not what to call you." The most gracious of all English queens could surpass the whole world in ungraciousness when her pride so dictated.

Like Wolsey, Elizabeth recognized the dangers of Protestantism. The dying Cardinal had sent, with his last breath, a message to his King to " beware of the Lutherans," for so the Boleyn faction was called. The seeds of republicanism in the Protestant revolt were thus far back foreseen and pointed out by Cardinal Wolsey. If Henry did not profit by this warning, his daughter did. She saw the tendency and tried to counteract it. The rise of preachers and of preaching made her uneasy. " Two or three are enough for a whole county," she said. She wanted no John Knoxes in her country and the great evangelist himself was not allowed to enter. In spite of his persistent suit the Queen would not give him a passport.

Nevertheless Elizabeth was deeply disturbed, and apparently sincerely, when Henry the Fourth of France turned Catholic. His Protestantism had been learned in the same school as her mother's and his desertion of that school, for political reasons, touched her nearly. No one was better qualified than she to understand the promptings of ambition and the political motives which led to Henry's apostasy. But, after all, he was a Frenchman, who could shrug his shoulders and say: " A kingdom is worth a mass." Elizabeth was the offspring of quite another people. " Ah, what grief!

ah, what regret! ah, what pangs," she wrote, "have seized my heart, at the news which Morlant has communicated. My God! is it possible that any worldly consideration could render you regardless of the divine displeasure? Can we reasonably expect any good result can follow such an iniquity? How can you imagine that He, whose hand has supported and upheld your cause so long, could fail you at your need? It is a perilous thing to do ill that good may come of it!" How seriously she took the matter was shown by her return for a brief time to a life of contemplation and meditation. As she had done in her youth after similarly great tragedies, she shut herself up with books and gave herself to translation. This time it was Boethius on *The Consolations of Philosophy*. Perhaps his exposition of Greek tolerance was the nearest thing to a creed that Elizabeth ever achieved. At heart she was a pagan.

IV

Elizabeth's favourite, Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, has been much criticized by historians. His position made him an object of universal envy, and it was hard for his contemporaries to report him justly. But there are grounds for believing that his character was less superficial than it is generally supposed to have been. At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign he was idle, easy-going, frivolous.

Yet even then there were signs which showed, beneath his plumes and emeralds, a ground-work of integrity. For instance, his behaviour in connexion with the death of his wife, the ill-fated Amy Robsart, was apparently sincere and entirely irreproachable. As he grew older, some influence still unrevealed — perhaps only life and its experience, perhaps strong family ties behind the public scene — steadied and deepened his character, until toward the end he was a devoted Puritan. Within the man of fashion had gradually been developed a man of purpose.

The real portrait of Lord Leicester is still to be drawn; his personality and appearance continue to elude us. A contemporary describes him as "brown of visage" and his great enemy and rival, the Earl of Sussex, referred to him as "the gypsy." Yet his portraits do not represent him as a dark man. It was doubtless disregarded as the one flaw in his beauty, for brunettes were not fashionable in the days of the Tudors. In middle age he lost his finely proportioned figure and grew corpulent, like Henry the Eighth. His brown face became puffed and florid and thus his physical resemblance to King Henry was increased. But here the resemblance stopped. The years which brought despair and disintegration to the King brought more strength and stability to Lord Leicester. Both men died at about the same age.

Leicester was "infamed," as Cecil said, by the death of his wife. His enemies accused him of having

her murdered. Yet he was certainly too amiable at that time and —paradoxical as it may seem— too irresponsible to have murdered anybody. Later on, for political and conscientious reasons, he had a hand in the death of Mary Queen of Scots, but tradition has obligingly overlooked his actual guilt. His qualities as a general during his campaign in Holland have been, on the other hand, criticized and derided. Yet even his worst critics admit the impossibility of his task in the face of Elizabeth's attitude, for Leicester had by this time gone Puritan and Elizabeth had not.

His ancestry has likewise been cried down as that of an upstart. But for the age in which hereditary dukes had been wiped out, he was well descended. He could justly hold up his head with contemporary English peers. There was ancient blood on the female side of his house, and this was about all that any nobleman could boast of after the War of the Roses. Following that great holocaust, the grandest ladies of the land were obliged to choose between their clerks and their equerries. But this was, after all, not an unmixed evil. Leicester's father and grandfather had been men of the hour, who had died on the scaffold as scapegoats. The odium which had attached to their names rested on the innocent head of Dudley. The ambition for which John Dudley died was attributed without reason to the son; while the Puritan strain, which was Robert's sole inheritance from his father,

has never been worthily estimated. There was in all the Dudleys a leaning towards the people.

They were a clannish family, especially the generation to which Sir Robert belonged. Whatever the men plotted, the women helped to carry out. When one brother went to the Tower, all of them went. There was no jealousy among them. The closest family ties united the grown-up brotherhood. None of them apparently envied the Earl of Leicester, nor did he with his great magnificence cease to be a Dudley. After his mother's death his sister, Mary Sidney, held the family together and the great Earl, who could no longer move without a retinue, was often at her house, entourage and all. But it was a dying generation that gathered around her fireside. The Dudleys were worn out by tragedy and misfortune. Too many heads had fallen; there had been too many hair's-breadth escapes. "*Nuptiae steriles*," as Cecil once said of them. "No brother had children."

It throws some light on Leicester's relation to Elizabeth to know that his mother was a clever woman, a passable lawyer, and a matriarchal spirit; and that her daughter inherited her place. No one could have occupied the position that Leicester filled who had not been accustomed from childhood to respect women. His mother had certainly been a most able parent and he could follow any woman's lead who was on a par with her. It meant no loss of self-respect to him to be ruled by a woman with the talents

of Elizabeth. He could throw himself at his sovereign's feet without hypocrisy, and rise with undiminished dignity to face her councillors.

Elizabeth and Leicester undoubtedly loved each other though what that love consisted in would be hard to analyse. There was something within them both which caused them to stop short of a physical union. Five years after their friendship had begun, Elizabeth protested that there had been no physical relations between them. At the crisis of a severe illness and with the fear of death before her she made this assertion. "The Queen protested at the time," wrote de Quadra to Philip, "that although she loved and had always loved Lord Robert dearly, as God was her witness, nothing improper had ever passed between them." Their most intimate approaches had apparently taken place in public. On one occasion, while the Queen was still in bed, Leicester had called on her and had incidentally handed her her chemise. This had provoked a storm in the Council, and the Duke of Norfolk, as spokesman for that body, had taken the officious Earl to task. But Leicester, whose tact in such matters seems to have been unfailing, avoided an explanation, and the matter was then dropped. But it led to other and remoter consequences. It was probably the origin of the case of *lése majesté* which was reported as follows in the official documents of Elizabeth's reign:

"The saying of Anne Dow of Burntwood, widow

of the age of threescore and eight years, examined before Thomas Mildmay, Esquire, one of the Queen's Majesty's Justices of the Peace within the said county as followeth:

"First, she sayeth that about five weeks last past she was at Rochford, and there being in the house of [one] dwelling upon Rochford Green beyond the parsonage, the wife of the said house said openly in the presence of this examinat and others there being that Dudley had given the Queen a new petticoat which cost twenty nobles. To which woman this examinat said, the Queen had no need of his coat for she was able to buy one herself. Item, she sayeth further that within three days then next after she went out of the said town and . . . met with one Mr. Coke riding upon a horse. And at their meeting together the said Mr. Coke asked her and said: 'What news, Mother Dow?' and she said a woman told her that Dudley had given the queen a new petticoat that cost twenty nobles. And the said Coke said to the said examinat: 'Thinkest thou that it was a petticoat? No, no. He gave her a child, I warrant thee.' And the said Coke, having a bottle of wine at his saddle-bow, gave her a drink of the said bottle and so they departed."

While Secretary Cecil and his assistants strove to stamp out these scandals, the indiscretions of the Queen of England and the Earl of Leicester constantly revived them. At times they seemed almost

like a pair of naughty children who took pleasure in shocking their elders. The Queen returned her favourite's calls at all hours of the day and night. In the midst of a hot game of tennis the Earl seized her pocket-handkerchief and wiped his perspiring brow. He kissed her without an invitation, which was unthinkable, although the greatest stranger might properly do so when invited. They were always transgressing the proprieties. At Windsor the Queen disguised herself as her maid and stole out to the park to watch the Earl shoot at a mark. In the ceremony of conferring a peerage upon him she tickled his neck. What else but such trifling was to be expected under the circumstances? They were both still in their twenties and but lately released from stern danger and grinding hardship. They gave themselves up to the hour like ordinary persons, unimportant to history.

There was one casualty. The former cofferer, Sir Thomas Parry, died, it was said, " of sheer grief." He had survived only two years of Elizabeth's reign, on which he failed to leave any impression. For ten years previously he had been her most intimate and trusted adviser and the shock of his dispossession was apparently too great. Elizabeth, hardly stopping a moment to grieve for him, divided his place between two younger men. Sir William Cecil was made Treasurer, and Leicester had already pre-empted his privileges as friend. Perhaps if Elizabeth had stopped to reflect on his end at all, she would have seen a certain justice

in his fall at this time. He who had profited so much in her good graces by the death of Thomas Seymour had been in turn dislodged by the tricks of fate. Once and once only in their long and close association had the cofferer ever failed her. But that time Lord Seymour had gone to the block. Elizabeth must have been wholly without resentment and retaliatory feelings if she had completely forgotten the bitter circumstances. But she said nothing, as far as is known, in honour of the memory of, or otherwise concerning, her old servitor. His death passed unnoticed.

With Parry's death the last emotional tie which bound her to the past and which might in any way have stood between Elizabeth and Dudley was broken. At the same time he had been released from the claims of legal marriage. He had been made Earl of Leicester and Baron of Denbigh and hung with orders. But still there was no change in his relations with the Queen.

"They said of me," said Elizabeth, with a kind of pathetic wonderment, "that I did not marry because I was fond of the Earl of Leicester, and that I would not marry him because he had a wife already. Although he has no wife alive now, I still do not marry. . . ."

Chapter VI

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I

At the time when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, Spain and France were quarreling quite openly as to who should rule her island. They took it for granted that England would ultimately fall to one of them, annexed by marriage or diplomacy or subdued by conquest. An independent nation, far less an expanding empire, was not dreamed of by Europe.

When the last of the Tudor family turned out to be a marriageable young woman, the task seemed almost too easy. Catherine de Medici had three marriageable sons, and Philip of Spain himself was a widower and eligible. The former three were a little too young and the latter was a little too old for Queen Elizabeth, but when such great kingdoms were at stake, these discrepancies were trivial. Philip, as we have seen, sought the heiress's hand first, but he gave up his suit in a short time. He had other methods in reserve, he thought, other cards to play, but his ambassador realized the finality of their loss. "We have lost a kingdom," he said bitterly, "body and soul." The turn of Catherine de Medici, who still continued to look upon England as a dowry for her off-

spring, came later. When her suit did not prosper, the indignant matron wrote: "So, Monsieur de La Mothe, you are on the point of losing such a kingdom as that for my children." Even within England itself there were many important persons who saw the country as a future appanage of Spain or France and thought it was only a matter of choice between masters. The Queen alone, it seems, had no conception of England as anything but sovereign. She was, in a sense, too provincial and ignorant of the rest of the world. In spite of her linguistic attainments and the depth of her learning, she was an English peasant at heart. "I am the most English woman of the kingdom," she was wont to say. "Was I not born in this realm? Were my parents born in any foreign country?" she burst out once in Parliament.

It must be admitted that her status for a queen was unusual. Like few sovereigns of history, she could boast of being the native-born child of native-born parents. Thanks to the *mésalliance* of Henry the Eighth, Elizabeth was not a foreigner, as so many English potentates before and after her have been.

William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, was like the Queen in being "mere English." A detractor of his once remarked that he had never been on the continent and thought that England was the world. Froude repudiates the criticism. He says that Cecil went to Holland in Queen Mary's time to meet Cardinal Pole. The incident is otherwise significant,



for it coincides with Cecil's lapse from Protestantism, when, like Princess Elizabeth, he went to mass, preferring it to exile. But, in spite of his trip to Holland, he thought, like Queen Elizabeth, that England was the world; and all the books in Cambridge and his own well-stocked library could not give him a broader view. He was like the ancient Greeks in his provincialism.

William Cecil's father was born in Burleigh, or Burghley, the village from which the ennobled family took its name. Just how gentle or how simple the first Cecils were would be hard to say, for the great house of Burghley rose so swiftly in Elizabeth's time that its humble foundation was speedily forgotten. One early member, Lord Burghley's mother, survived into the days of its greatest grandeur, but could never accommodate herself to the rise in her fortunes. Silk and velvet for everyday use was repugnant to her frugal ideas, and the Secretary of State was obliged to command her to wear them. Burghley himself was a sedate, not a splendid, figure. His robes of state were sombre and clerical. There was no trace of chivalry or Norman pride in him. By comparison with Lord Leicester, he was as sobre as a hermit. His favourite mount was a mule on which he ambled about the paths of his well-kept garden like a mediæval monk. Armour would have been as foreign to his taste as were silk and velvet to his mother's. He was a poor scholar grown prosperous.



QUEEN ELIZABETH. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery

Cecil was a devotee of Greek, which was Queen Elizabeth's hobby. At the age of thirteen he married the sister of his Greek professor, and, but for his early marriage, he might have turned out to be a bookish scholar like Sir Roger Ascham. His second wife was more learned in her own right than his first, being one of the foremost intellectual women of her age. Mildred Cooke was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, a Protestant who fled to the continent. He brought up his daughters to be as learned as himself. "My life is your portion," he said to them; "my example your inheritance." Thus Cecil, who had married Mildred Cooke, was ruled by a bluestocking at home and a bluestocking at court. When his own daughter came along he presented her with a spinning-wheel and an English poem, for the fashion of learned ladies had gone out by that time.

Cecil was thirty-eight when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne and made him Secretary. The connexion between them had already existed for some time, but it ran underneath the surface during the previous reign. Cecil's relationship by marriage to Cheke and Anthony Cooke, who were Prince Edward's tutors and Elizabeth's as well, is the first trace of it. As Secretary to the Duke of Somerset, the Protestant Lord Protector, Cecil was for a brief time important, and certainly in a position to favour Princess Elizabeth. Apparently he did, especially in the dark period following Seymour's death. He was in communication

with Thomas Parry and doubtless had a hand in the granting of Elizabeth's patent. He was a typical Englishman in that he conformed to the religion of each reign; for after Edward's death he served as Secretary to Queen Mary, having in the interim similarly officiated for the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey. Nothing was more obvious than that, when Elizabeth came to the throne, the man who had served so long as Secretary should be continued in his office. To the ten years which he had served previously, he was destined to add forty years more of arduous labour for the State. It would be hard to over-estimate his service, though it is idle to compare his ability with the Queen's. A partnership which lasted forty years must have had strong elements of equality in it.

Cecil was methodical, careful, painstaking. "No one looked to the clock so long as he," said one when he died. No matter was too trivial for him, no matter too great, if it was business of the Queen. He would send for samples of cloth to make her a gown with the same devotion with which he would attend to an international treaty. Some source of inward grace and meekness gave him the patience to bear with her outbursts of temper, although at times his suffering broke forth in laments. "I have had such a torment herein, with the Queen's Majesty," he wrote to Throckmorton, "as an ague hath not in five fits so much abated me." A cautious man by temperament,

he learned to cherish his credit with his capricious mistress. When the same Throckmorton wrote to him from Paris, saying: " Sir: Do not so forget yourself as to think you do enough when you do nothing to further the matter [the Queen's marriage]. Remember your mistress is young and subject to affections; you are her sworn councillor and in great credit with her "; Cecil replied: " I must advise you not to meddle with the matters of this court, otherwise than ye be well advised from hence. What Her Majesty will determine to do, only God I think knoweth, and in her His will be fulfilled." In this cautious reply lies the key to much of Cecil's power and influence with the Queen. He knew when he had reached their limits and was content at this point to let matters take their course. He put aside his careful notes and went for an amble on his mule.

But Cecil had lived through too many political reactions not to realize the dangers that he ran. When Queen Elizabeth sometimes teased him and the other councillors by saying that she would come back after her death and see Mary Queen of Scots making their heads fly from their shoulders, Cecil could appreciate the joke more than most. He had seen poor Mary Tudor go stark staring mad and pour out Protestant blood like water. He was threatened himself by assassination at Catholic hands. Yet all that he could do had brought the Queen no nearer to marriage. Watching her sterile flirtation with the Earl of

Leicester through long, anxious years, he comported himself with astonishing equanimity.

II

The throne was not only occupied by a woman, but surrounded by female claimants. The Tudor strain had run out as far as male heirs were concerned. The Scotch marriage and the Brandon match had been equally unproductive of sons. Catherine and Mary Grey, the commonplace sisters of the tragic Lady Jane, were next in line for the throne according to the testament of Henry the Eighth. The descendants of his sister Margaret, whom Henry did not like and had therefore overlooked, were Mary Stuart and Margaret Douglas. The Scotch cousins were Catholic while the Greys were Protestant. Elizabeth despised the Greys and hated Margaret Douglas, the ill-natured Countess of Lennox, who fully returned her hatred. Mary Stuart, on the other hand, she feared and respected. Secretly Elizabeth envied her Scotch cousin and in her heart she regarded Mary as her heir. This was a disloyalty to her father which she could never openly admit, a disloyalty to her mother who had died a Lutheran, and a disloyalty to her own Protestant government. Yet with her strong dynastic feelings she could never get away from it. She was involved in the consequences of an inherited policy.

Henry the Seventh had not foreseen the English

reformation and the revolt of his son. Henry the Eighth had raised this barrier to his scheme of British unity and acknowledged that he had raised it by naming only the English Protestant line in his list of successors. Elizabeth inherited from her father and grandfather. Their irreconcilable programs were only another of the many forms in which a contrary fate pursued her.

The dubious state of Elizabeth's health did not render the question of succession any less agonizing. She had seizures like fits and long spells of unconsciousness. She succumbed to the frosts of the English winter, which in those days sometimes froze the Thames. "Her constitution cannot be very strong," said Philip's watchful ambassador. The Protestant party was acutely concerned. The House of Commons trembled and Lady Catherine Grey married secretly. It was indeed high time, for her child was on the way. Elizabeth was furious. She locked up the offending lady, but she could not prevent her from bearing a son in the Tower. In the interest of justice Elizabeth sent the father to the Tower as well, but, what with Protestant jailers and natural human instincts, her measures only resulted in Lady Catherine Grey's bearing another son.

The savageness of Elizabeth's anger can well be imagined. Lifelong imprisonment was all too mild to satisfy her vengeance, but it was fatal to Lady Catherine, who was given to melancholy. She was finally allowed to leave her ill-kempt apartment in the Tower

and to retire with her dogs to the custody of a private gentleman. Her only resource was to write abject letters, which was worse than useless, for Elizabeth was never moved by cringing in any form. The unfortunate prisoner finally pined away and died. Her sister, the tiny Lady Mary, married a porter of the palace gates, a giant in height, and became through this a general laughing stock. She was literally laughed out of court. This was the end of the ill-omened Greys. Beginning with Lady Jane, they had but a fragile hold on life. Perhaps it was because their parents were, as Lady Jane asserted, cruel to them in childhood. Be that as it may, they all succumbed to persecution, in one form or another, with scarcely a single effort to resist their untoward fate. They went down with colours trailing.

The Catholic cousins were more upstanding. They had inherited more vigour from their buxom progenitor, Lady Margaret, who had divorced herself as often as she liked without worrying about the Pope. Consequently her descendants, Mary Stuart and Margaret Douglas, were still good Catholics. But they had also inherited from Henry the Seventh's eldest daughter a certain feeling of being fobbed off with Scotland while the rest of the family were provided for in England. Although Queen of Scotland, Margaret Tudor always insisted that she was just as good an Englishwoman as if she had never been removed by marriage from her native coutnry. She left her youngest daugh-

ter, Margaret Douglas, to be brought up at the English court and transmitted her sense of banishment to her granddaughter, Mary Stuart.

Mary's one great error was in styling herself Queen of England at the outset of Elizabeth's reign. She could never redeem this fatal step, even if she had cared to, which she never did. Taken at the instigation of her father-in-law, the King of France, it nevertheless corresponded to her own convictions. It is true that Elizabeth, conversely, styled herself " Queen of France," but no one took it seriously, least of all Elizabeth. The title was as empty as her claim, among other things, to be " Empress from the Orcade Isles to the Mountains Pyranée." But Mary Stuart's claim was no empty vaunt. Having once assumed it, she held to it stubbornly because she felt, deep in her heart, that she would one day realize the fact. When her husband died and she lost the throne of France, she clung all the more tenaciously to her English hopes. The French relationship which had originally supported her demands had no longer any interest in them. Yet Mary was as obdurate as ever on that head. She had lost the prospect of becoming another Catherine de Medici but the prospect of becoming a Queen in her own right, as was Elizabeth, was even more fascinating to her temperament. She was, from her girlhood, an ardent feminist.

III

When Mary Stuart returned to Scotland, having, indeed, nowhere else to go, she asked Elizabeth's permission to pass through England. The Queen replied, reasonably enough, that until she had signed the Treaty of Edinburgh and relinquished her pretensions, such permission could not be given her. Much offended, but still evading the question of the treaty, Mary took ship with her entourage and proceeded northward by sea. One of her henchmen, Sir James Melville, travelled through England. He was received at Hampton Court, where Queen Elizabeth quizzed him narrowly about his mistress. Melville, in his memoirs, pictures the inquirer as jealous. She was certainly very curious about Mary's looks and accomplishments. "Is she higher than I?" the Queen asked Melville. "She is," the Ambassador replied. "Then," said Elizabeth, "she is too high, for I myself am neither too high nor too low." She asked him which of them was fairer, but Melville divided the honours equally. She then asked him if Mary played well on the virginals, and the Scotchman replied: "Reasonably for a queen"; after he had heard Elizabeth play, he felt himself obliged to give her the palm. The Queen danced in his presence and inquired which of them excelled, herself or his mistress, but again Melville had no preference. He finally proposed that the Queen, since she was curious, should disguise herself as a



QUEEN ELIZABETH. From the painting by Zuccaro at Hampton Court

page and accompany him to Scotland to see his mistress at first hand. He went into details, to which Elizabeth wistfully hearkened. "She appeared to like that kind of language," he said. She was still romantic at thirty.

Elizabeth was no longer the great match of Europe. She was no longer the best marriage in the parish, but only one of the two best, for the fact that Mary was younger and more amenable made her a serious rival. Elizabeth felt her baleful influence at once. The impecunious Archduke Charles, her long-suffering suitor, wavered for the first time in his loyalty. The English Queen changed her attitude, beckoned, and he came back again. The Queen of Scots sulked.

Elizabeth was desperate. It was apparent that her cousin's mind was bent on marriage, like any ordinary peasant girl deprived of a mate. It was a case for desperate remedies. The Queen perceived this and proposed her favourite, Leicester, as a matrimonial stopgap. She said that if Mary would marry Leicester, she would give her the English succession for a wedding present. Whether she was sincere or not, she made the offer publicly and officially and it led indirectly to serious consequences.

Mary was at first surprised, if not indignant. Whether this was because the French court scorned the match for the Dowager Queen of France or because she thought that Elizabeth was trifling with her, we cannot say. She must have been bewildered by one

feature of Elizabeth's plan, if not alienated. This was the strange proposal that Elizabeth, Mary, and Leicester should form a common household, of which Elizabeth, in her eagerness to smooth the way, offered to pay all the expenses. The intimacy between Elizabeth and Leicester, which must have been often enough pictured to Mary, had not prepared her for this proposition. But after some delay she decided to accept the plan, whatever it entailed, and gave her definite consent to the English Ambassador.

Leicester was apparently the sane one at this time. At the outset he tried to extricate himself from the eccentric scheme but without succeeding. In a delicate situation he behaved admirably. He accompanied Mary's messenger, Melville, away from the court, and, instead of offering himself to Mary to back up his mistress, he apologized to Melville for seeming to woo his sovereign. But the warning was too subtle for the perturbed recipient. He soon heard that the Queen of Scots was thinking of accepting him and took immediate steps to forestall her decision. It seems unlikely that Elizabeth assisted his plan; certainly she thundered loudly enough against its consequences.

Lord Darnley, his rival, was hastily smuggled into Scotland, as a substitute, on the pretence of business. "I scarce dare advance it here," Randolph wrote to Leicester, "that your Lordship was a counsellor of my Lord Darnley's coming hither." The Queen may have suspected it, but when she heard that

Mary Stuart had fallen in love with Margaret Douglas's son, she ordered him home instantly. She had not given him leave of absence for that purpose, but in order that he might look after his property in Scotland. But the young man, though her subject and her courtier, did not obey her. The Queen of Scots detained him in Scotland.

IV

For all her vigour of character, Mary Stuart was very suggestible. No sooner did she set eyes on Darnley than she fell in love with him. She, who had just been ready to marry Elizabeth's candidate, Lord Leicester, accepted the first Lochinvar that leaped over the border. Leicester had not misjudged her. That Darnley was the first wooer that had actually presented himself may have touched her fancy. It gave him a false air of enterprise, for he was not adventurous. Others had found the loop-hole for him.

Nevertheless he was the obvious husband for Mary Stuart. He was almost old enough, being nineteen, while she was twenty-three. He was the grandson of Margaret Tudor, the great-grandson of Henry the Seventh. He and Mary were both Tudors and descendants of the royal house of Scotland as well, and their union was a triumph of matchmaking. Small wonder that Elizabeth dreaded the consequences. Their combined claims were formidable.

The redoubtable Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, had secretly planned this marriage from the first moment of Mary's widowhood. Her son's tutor had been sent to the docks at Leith to propose on his behalf to the returning Queen of Scots. At Hampton Court, Melville had seen Darnley and had liked the "long lad's" looks, although he deliberately pretended otherwise to Elizabeth. All this has led many to suppose that Mary was intending all the while to marry Darnley and Darnley only, and that she was merely playing with the idea of Leicester to put Elizabeth off the track. Mary was not so subtle, at least not at this period of her life, and probably at no period was she capable of such deliberateness. Until that February day in 1565 when she first saw Henry Darnley and fell in love with him, she had probably not thought of marrying him.

She was infatuated with the youth. Her state, according to the ambassadors, might be called psychopathic. In those days, however, they attributed such things to magic. The English and French ambassadors, who observed Mary's love-making, wrote to their courts that she was bewitched.

In spite of her importunate emotions, she offered to postpone the marriage in deference to Elizabeth's wishes. She agreed to put off the wedding for three months, and so deeply did she respect her English cousin that she substantially kept the agreement. Elizabeth herself agreed to nothing. Her attitude in

every way was less reasonable than Mary's. She sent the Countess of Lennox to prison, dispatched an emissary to fetch Darnley forcibly away from Scotland, and forgot entirely her recent scheme for marrying the Queen of Scots to Leicester. Undoubtedly she was relieved to have this danger averted, although the threat which took its place drove her almost frantic.

Though Mary failed at the last moment to keep her promise literally, she waited long enough to wear out her romance. She was married at sunrise on the 29th of July, 1565, by Catholic rites at Holyrood. She made a mournful-looking bride in her widow's gown of sable velvet. Already she was disillusioned about her future husband. For all his noble looks and growth, Darnley was still immature, having but recently grown a beard. A sensitive, dependent youth, scarcely out of leading strings, he was thrust into a rôle that would have tried the strongest character. Mary knew the type too well. He was a replica of the delicate young King of France, who had flickered out so soon after marriage, leaving her a clamorous and disappointed widow. The recognition contributed to her speedy disillusionment. She turned back to her intimacy with David Rizzio, the Italian secretary, who had grown to be her favourite before Darnley's arrival. Darnley, who had at first been greatly pleased with the Italian, sleeping in the same bed with him, now became violently jealous. The situation was already set for a tragedy, when Mary's pregnancy,

which now ensued, took away from her her last remnant of sound judgment.

The young man, whom the Scotch called "Davie," may have been a creature of the Pope. But he was probably not so important. He was a singer, like Mark Smeaton, lifted from obscurity solely by his tragic fate. He was stabbed by Darnley's friends in Mary's presence — "as if she were a public woman," said Elizabeth scornfully.

Mary buried him with honours in the royal chapel where she had just been married, and her dislike of her husband turned to loathing.

V

Three months later, in great pain and sore travail, Mary bore a son. "My lord," she said to Darnley when he came to look at the babe, "he is so much your own son that I fear it will be the worse for him hereafter." The poor child proved his pedigree in the coldness with which his mother regarded him. Her first thought was of Queen Elizabeth. Her son was only a few hours old when a messenger was sent off with the news to London. Sir James Melville was entrusted with the announcement of her triumph. Her boy was the scion of Henry the Seventh, the Frenchman who had dreamed of a united Britain, and she, Mary Queen of Scots, was the power that had produced him. This was the proud substance of her message to her cousin.

Elizabeth was with her court at Greenwich, engaged in a round of midsummer revels. She took part as usual in the merry-making and was, by all accounts, unusually mirthful. The news was broken to her at a dance before a great company. She had just been dancing herself when Cecil approached her where she stood and whispered in her ear. She sank into a chair as if she were ill. Several of her ladies hurried to her side. "The Queen of Scots," she said to them, "is lighter of a fair son, and I am but a barren stock."

But on the morrow, when Melville came officially to announce his news, Elizabeth was herself again. "She welcomed me with a merry volt," said Melville. Mary had got the best of her, but she was not resentful. The cautious Scotchman thought it well, however, to frighten her a little, and so he dwelt at length on the painful details of his Queen's confinement. "So sore handled" had she been, he said, that "she wished she had never been married." "This I said by the way," added the faithful clansman slyly, "to give her a little scare from marriage." He forgot that he had previously been quite convinced that Elizabeth was incapable of child-bearing.

Chapter VII

ALENÇON

I

Elizabeth's England was still feudal. Barons had a hundred servants, and dukes had three hundred. The Earl of Leicester had five hundred. Though these small armies had been much reduced by the economies of the Tudors, they were still very numerous. Young men of noble or superior birth, but without any particular future, crowded into the rush-strewn halls of the English country seats and waited for opportunities. But under the pacific sway of Queen Elizabeth they were all too limited.

Her reign was an era of rising prosperity. Chimneys multiplied like mushrooms, and two meals a day expanded into three. The moralists said that the country was effete. It is true that England now had a growing leisure class and that the conditions of living were for them much ameliorated. The hardships of war and celibacy were no longer a requisite for young men who had to find a career for their talents. The army and the Church had been supplemented by a new occupation. The profession of law had been invented. The crusaders had become lawyers, and their strongholds in the city, the temples, were in process

of conversion into inns of court. It was the irony of Elizabeth's fate that she who loved a steel-clad knight beyond all things in life, should be forced into becoming the patroness of lawyers.

Young men were more intellectual than they had been in her grandfather's time. Education was more widespread among them. Three generations of English scholars had produced a rich new flowering. The ancient languages had borne fruit in a new literary medium. Cambridge and Oxford graduates wrote poetry and prose in a brand-new vernacular. A new language had developed. Caxton's printing-press, nursed by Elizabeth's great-grandmother, had learned to print it fluently. History, epigrams, and poetry flowed from its clacking jaws in a veritable cascade. The unction of the Scriptures had given place to a spirit of worldliness and flippancy, not to speak of amorousness. Plays in English were not yet considered worthy of the printing-press, but all other forms of English literature were now in existence.

People were learning to live by their wits. Literature and espionage were recognized trades. Although the lawyers formed the bulk of the professional classes, there were other intellectual occupations that were seriously followed. Brain-work and brain-workers were already diversified.

The more ambitious of the young intellectuals had an eye on London, if not on the court. Elizabeth drew the cream of them. The generation of Lord Leicester

was the last which dared to present itself at court without a university diploma. The favourites who came after him were all lettered men, the fruit of the educational foundations established by Elizabeth's ancestors. The queen bandied verses with them and flirted by means of riddles and epigrams. *Affaires de cœur* which took the form of words passed easily into the form of gossip, and this gave rise to much of the scandal which besmirched Elizabeth's name. The ordinary people could not understand that behind all this open posturing there could be little warmth. A man in Dover was arrested for uttering shameful words against the Queen — accusations "so horrible" that the mayor "could not even write them down."

In the mean time the Queen and her favourites were indifferent to the public excitement. While Cecil and his spies struggled to save the reputation of their errant mistress, Leicester and his successors helped her to destroy it. They vied with her in the gorgeousness of their wearing-apparel as well as in the fooleries of light literature, and woe to anyone whose clothes did not please the royal monitor. Sir Matthew Arundel, her former suitor, failed lamentably in this respect. She spat on his Scotch fringe one day and remarked pointedly, "The fool's wit has gone to rags." Sir John Harington, her godson, shuddered to see the punishment. Lest all his epigrams might not save him from a similar fate, Sir John resolved at once to go to his tailor. "The Queen loveth to see me in my last frieze

jerkin," he said complacently; "I will have another made liken to it."

II

Sir Christopher Hatton was the Earl of Leicester's first serious rival. He was a typical Elizabethan courtier, as virginal a character as the Virgin Queen herself. A lofty figure in fine porcelain, he would form a better companion piece for Elizabeth than her first favourite. There was a remnant of the swashbuckler remaining in Leicester, but Hatton was one of the first English lawyers. He was extremely competent beneath his dandified exterior. The Earl of Sussex, who had killed wild boars, despised him for his gracefulness. He called him the "hero of the *gaillard*" because this was the dance in which his sovereign had first seen him and singled him out for attention. Although he was not chosen for that reason, he had a first-rate intellect, being not only a lawyer of parts, but also a classic scholar and a patron of the drama. He acted as literary secretary to the Queen. There is still extant a tragedy of Elizabeth's translating, copied in Hatton's handwriting.

Sir Christopher Hatton's private life was all that Elizabeth would have liked her bishops' lives to be. He was a confirmed bachelor and a devout High-Churchman. Stately and formal in his manners, precious in his speech, he was a better clerical

figure-head than most of the reformed bishops. The Bishop of Ely, Dr. Cox, was a good example of Elizabeth's married bishops. When Sir Christopher Hatton coveted his Holborn property, Ely place, the Queen decided to give it him. The churchman not unnaturally demurred, and Elizabeth sent to him the following stern mandate: "Proud prelate: You know what you were before I made you what you are now. If you do not immediately comply with my request, by God! I will unfrock you." The letter is much quoted, but less noted is the fact that the Bishop was a shrewd business manager who had made the most of the opportunities offered by his cloth. His rose-gardens in High Holborn were not the whole, by any means, of his landed possessions. The Queen, who mulcted him of them, knew that she was depriving him only of what he himself had seized. It irked her that the bishops had made such a good thing of the Reformation. "My bishops are a set of knaves," she often said.

She called the devoted Sir Christopher, not inappropriately, her "sheep," her "bell-wether." For many years he was Captain of the Queen's Guard, and always in her vicinity. But she had better things in store for him. He ended as Lord Chancellor, presiding over the Court of Chancery, the House of Lords, and the Star Chamber. Like Leicester, he suffered in his reputation from a frivolous circumstance, but like Leicester, too, he was far more able than people gave

him credit for being. He was the first great exemplar of England's barristers.

Strangely enough, Leicester and Hatton got on well together. They set a standard in this respect which the younger favourites who followed them found it hard to live up to. But harmony was obligatory in those early days. The Queen would endure no strife between her admirers and she was still strong enough to enforce her will. The rivalries which inevitably grew up about her as a person and as a power and which were, besides, stimulated by her own tendencies were never permitted to grow violent. She was marvellously even-handed in her saner moments. She balanced Leicester and Hatton skilfully, calling one her "eyes," and the other her "lidds."

III

Elizabeth was broad-minded about her favourites, but snobbish about her suitors. She would entertain the idea of none but a royal marriage. Almost all the eligible princes of Christendom, at one time or another, had proposed to her and she, in her own way, had refused them. One after the other the suitable candidates had lost their enthusiasm. The Queen had laughed behind her hand when Philip the Second retired from the lists, but she no longer had any smile to conceal. The year 1566 had brought an ominous shift of circumstances.

Mary Stuart had borne a son. The succession question pressed Elizabeth now as never before. The Queen of Scots, as a Catholic, loomed more threateningly than ever. There was no idea that her offspring and Darnley's would be anything but a future reinforcement of Mary's dynastic claims. Under the stress of this terror the Protestants in England became more aggressive, and even the Queen developed unusual decision. It came out in her new foreign policy and her changed attitude toward marriage. For several years her courtships and the foreign relations of England were grotesquely intermingled in a chapter of tragi-comedy unique in history.

The revolt of the Netherlands gave France and England for once a common interest. Both nations would have been glad to see the Spaniards driven from Holland, but neither of them wished to see an independent Netherlands, still less a self-governing country. The idea of a partition did not occur to either, perhaps because Elizabeth, for her part, had no wish for European possessions. Her imagination on that side was utterly provincial, while, on the westward boundary, it leaped out toward infinity.

It annoyed her intensely that the Protestant Dutch insisted on regarding her as their protector. They were like beggarly kindred. She could not disown them and yet their loyalty embarrassed her. On the one hand, she consented to aid their revolt, but, on the other, she declined to become their queen. The

sympathetic forces in her own government were embattled on behalf of the rebels, and, distasteful as such an alliance was to an imperialistic sovereign, she was obliged to undersign it. Yet she continued to negotiate with the royal houses of France and Spain, partly behind the backs of her councillors and partly with their knowledge, but without their assent. There was a half-political, half-romantic interlude in which Elizabeth and the son of Catherine de Medici played the leading parts.

Catherine de Medici, Dowager Queen of France and virtually its ruler, was the mother of four sons. The eldest was married to Mary Queen of Scots and died. The second took his place as Charles the Ninth. The third was his mother's favourite and became King of Poland. The fourth was the pet of his older sister, but was otherwise superfluous in the house of Valois. A soothsayer had once told the Queen Mother that all of her sons would be kings, but the youngest of them threatened to make the prophecy futile. While his mother looked around anxiously for means to elevate him, it was but natural that the maiden state of the Queen of England should occur to her. Although Elizabeth was easily old enough to be Alençon's mother, Catherine hesitated at nothing to crown her youngest son.

The departure of Mary Stuart had left her mother-in-law in full control and still with three sons to manage: Charles the Ninth, the King of France;

Henry, Duke of Anjou; and Francis, Duke of Alençon. Grandsons of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Francis the First that they were, they were but frail specimens of manhood. Catherine de Medici, the Dowager Queen, ordered their lives for them like the governess of a nursery. She made an attempt to marry the second, Henry of Anjou, to Elizabeth, but only long and futile negotiations ensued. It is possible that his doting mother never had any intention of giving him up. She finally cut the Gordian knot by sending him to Poland. As if she had had some weird fore-knowledge of future events, she waited only a short time to welcome him home again. The sickly Charles had followed after his frail elder brother, and the Duke of Anjou came to the throne as Henry the Third. There remained now but the youngest, the Duke of Alençon, to enthrone. Him the managing Queen Mother was ready to immolate on the altar of her ambition.

Elizabeth was British enough to revere the French. A proposal from that illustrious court flattered her vanity. While historians have made her out as a superwoman of intrigue, using her *affaires de cœur* as a cover for diplomacy, she was in many ways as simple as an *ingénue*. In the case of the Duke of Anjou, who was not himself in earnest, she may have played a calculating part. This prince was always guarding and feinting on his side while she was dallying on hers. Anjou, with his thousand shirts and his essences and

perfumes, professed to be annoyed by Elizabeth's reputation. Elizabeth, with a placid acceptance of the implication, retaliated by objecting to his Catholicism. Lord Burghley and his assistant secretary, Walsingham, were the buffers. Oftentimes they trembled at the risky business in which the Queen involved them, and Walsingham, who was stationed in Paris, was especially on pins. They were all relieved, the principals no less, when the offer of the Polish crown put an end to the diplomatic love-duel. Elizabeth, such was her luck, had managed the whole thing very creditably. The French King said that "for her upright dealing he would honour the Queen of England during her life."

IV

Catherine de Medici sat in her garden and contemplated her youngest son. He was nineteen and undersized. The first signs of a beard had begun to show on his pock-marked face. He was furthermore disfigured by a very large nose. Hercules, the name by which he had been baptized, was so manifestly unsuited to his form and disposition that the name of his eldest brother, Francis, had been bestowed on him after the latter's death. He had likewise inherited the title of Anjou after the second son had become King of Poland. Clad in these habiliments of his elder brothers, the youth was fired to emulate their other conquests.

The indefatigable Queen Mother had an idea. "If the Queen," she said to one of Elizabeth's emissaries, "could have fancied my son Anjou, why not this one, of the same house, father and mother, and as vigorous and lusty as he, and rather more? And now he beginneth to have a beard come forth, for that I told him the last day that I was angry with it, for I was now afraid that he would not be so high as his brethren."

Sir Thomas Smith, the Ambassador, sent forward his report, not concealing the pock-marks, the short stature, and the over-sized nose. He knew that his Queen liked men to be tall and handsome. And, as he had expected, she demurred. An oil portrait which followed did not help matters. At last Queen Catherine had a bright idea, which she communicated to Elizabeth by the usual channels. She had found a skilful surgeon, she said, who would remove the scars from Alençon's face. The Queen of England's answer did her credit. Considering the great love that Catherine had always shown her children, she asked, why had the Queen Mother not long before done this?

The Frog-Prince, as Elizabeth called her youthful admirer, was by no means passive in his courtship. From the moment when the suggestion was first made to him, he took the project seriously, and eventually it assumed for him life-and-death proportions. Elizabeth was, apparently, no kinder to him that was his own mother. When she had him in her power, she played with him "as a cat plays with a mouse," ac-

cording to her most charitable biographer, " and was ready to catch him in her claws again whenever he showed signs of vitality." She made a tragic wreck of the unstable youth, and finished involuntarily the work which his mother had started.

More brilliant and decidedly more practical than Catherine de Medici's idea of removing the scars from Alençon's face was her scheme for sending a proxy to England. Jean de Simier was Alençon's Tristan. As long as Elizabeth, with whom coyness was a disease, refused to commit herself by inviting Alençon to England, his mother and his brother kept the young man in France. The courtship consequently made no progress. Pride and prudence on the one hand and coquetry on the other had produced a dead-lock. Finally the French party hit upon a well-known expedient. They — that is, Catherine de Medici — chose a henchman who was undistinguished except for the fact that he was admirably suited for the especial purpose to go to England as a proxy. Jean de Simier had just passed through a domestic tragedy, in which he had slain his wife and his brother for adultery. He was unhappy and cynical; a man of deeds, not of words, like Brantôme. Probably the desperate mission appealed to his mood. At any rate, to an extent which no one had anticipated, he came, and saw, and conquered.

It was the old story, celebrated in many an ancient legend. Simier, on behalf of his master, made

successful love to his master's lady. Elizabeth was, like himself, in desperate straits. She realized that for every reason the hour was heavy with fate. So far as marriage was concerned, it was her last opportunity. When, therefore, in the course of the preliminaries, chance dropped at her feet a flesh-and-blood admirer, she let herself go in unrestrained response. The deeply-lying plebeianism within her nature came out to meet the antics of her French suitor. As his gallantries became more and more intimate, her own behaviour waxed more and more reckless. Her *décolletage* was extreme; the French Ambassador declared that she received him in a morning dress open to the *nombril*. But another Frenchman reported more graciously: "This discourse rejuvenates the Queen; she has become more beautiful and blooming than she was fifteen years ago." There was something real in the passing affair. Elizabeth, perhaps for the second time in her life, was close to the mystery of physical love.

As the Queen said truly of herself, her life was not lived in a corner. There was no screen for her relations with Jean de Simier. Her "Monkey," as she called him, lived up to his nickname. He performed cheerfully in public, or, at least, before the eyes of the attendants and the court. Elizabeth responded equally frankly. She received her French visitor in her morning robe and sent him messages about the beauty of her feet. Simier reciprocated by welcoming her at his water-gate clad only in his jerkin and

minus his hose. His excuse for the exposure of his bare legs was that he could not keep Her Majesty waiting. Unfortunately history says nothing about the "Monkey's" appearance and so we do not know whether his skill in wooing was supplemented by a fine figure and good looks, or whether his unaided arts bore away the victory. In any case his strongest aid was the new life of the Queen. It was her Indian summer, her dangerous period, that age in every woman's life when instinct takes a last desperate leap upwards towards the sun.

This time it was not only the villagers who were shocked. The court was horrified. Leicester, who had begun by favouring the marriage, lost his balance completely. Elizabeth had commanded him to entertain the French Ambassador whenever she wished to have Simier to herself. But now he was alarmed at the success of the Frenchman. He shuddered at the risks which he saw his mistress taking, and his trepidation was not solely due to jealousy. The man with whom the Queen of England was thus blatantly flirting was not the Duke of Alençon, but his Master of the Wardrobe. The noble Duke was still as far from England as ever. It was not for a mere serving-man that the Earl of Leicester had been prepared gallantly to sacrifice himself. He and Hatton put their heads together and presently the court was startled by a new sensation. A suborned attack had been made on Simier's life. The Queen rushed to his aid like a

clucking hen and swept him off to Greenwich Palace and to apartments adjacent to hers. He had lodged of yore at the French Ambassador's residence beyond the Thames, but now she would no longer trust him out of her sight. In the event that his enemies should still pursue him, she gave him a key to her own chambers.

Though Simier was furious and panting for revenge, he did not lose his head nor forget his purpose. He pressed his new advantage hard. He knew that the Earl of Leicester, at the first suspicion of banishment, had consoled himself precipitately in the arms of legal wedlock. Lettice Knollys, widow of the Earl of Essex, had stepped into the breach, and, like the determined woman and the descendant of the Boleyns that she was, had done her best to widen it. She had seen to it that her marriage to Leicester was by no means secret. No less than two ceremonies had been required to capture the arch-evader. But all the world now knew his wedded state except his Queen, to whom no one dared to confide it.

The irate Simier broke the news at this strategic moment. Elizabeth was naturally wounded to the quick. Already out of favour and deeply in disgrace, the Earl of Leicester was subjected to imprisonment and, what was worse, roundly denounced in the presence of the court. The sensitive proud nobleman was glad to creep away and hide himself in the solitude of the fortress. Even his worst enemy, the

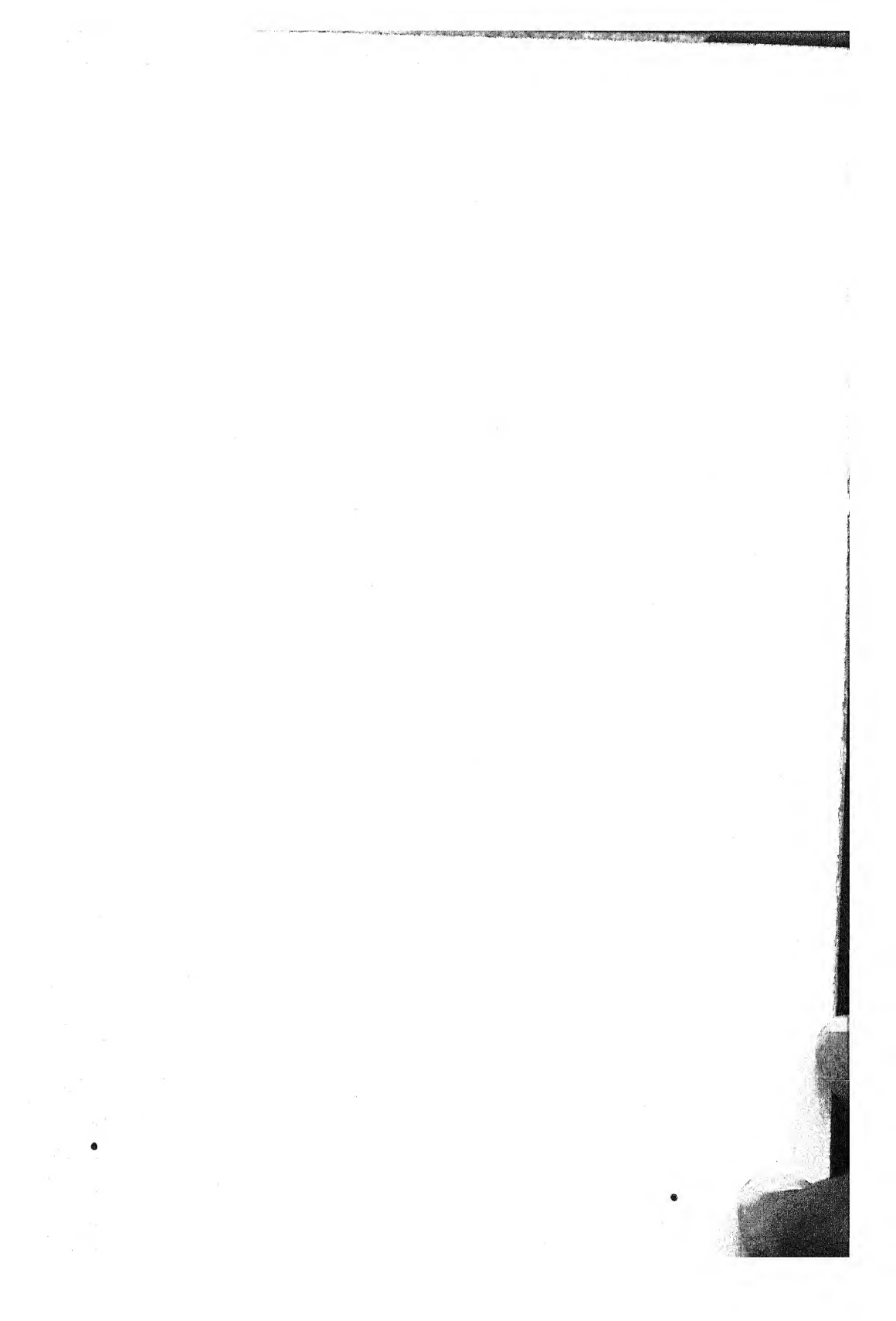
Earl of Sussex, came forward to defend him. "No man should be troubled for lawful marriage," he said, "which amongst all men has ever been held in honour and esteem." But Elizabeth, while forbearing to inflict further punishment, still kept him in the guard-house.

Smarting from this hurt, she signed the passports for Alençon. To be sure, he was to travel incognito and his visit was to be a secret, but he was to come to England and at her invitation. Simier was established in a garden-house at Greenwich, and there it was arranged that he should receive the young Duke. He came quietly by the Thames and stayed for two days, during which, behind an ostentatious screen of privacy, he pressed his suit. Elizabeth's councillors, presumably, were not present. What passed between her and Alençon no one but Simier knew. No doubt there was much hilarity, for Elizabeth promptly nicknamed her suitor her "Frog," as Simier was already her "Monkey." With this quaint menagerie she disappeared for two summer days in her garden and then came to view again, protesting that she was well pleased with her choice. The Frog had meanwhile sailed away as quietly as he came and, from the other side of the Channel, announced his satisfaction with the results of his visit. The Queen and Alençon had formally plighted their troth. Nevertheless the betting was three to one against the marriage in fashionable circles, and even the elated Monkey was still

anxious. "I shall not be satisfied," he said, "until the curtain is drawn, the candles out, and Monsieur fairly in bed."

Autumn came and chilly mists shrouded the Thames but the Queen had not yet named the date for the wedding. Simier, still faithful to his task, pressed her unceasingly for a decisive word. He had, with great adroitness, yielded his place to his master, Alençon, and Elizabeth found herself confronted by a real courtship. She tried to shift her burden to the shoulders of her council. It convened obediently at her behest and spent two whole months considering the proposed nuptials. But it positively refused to invite the Duke of Alençon to England; it refused, in spite of her womanish tears, to urge her to marry at all; it was only willing to discuss the question at endless length, while Burghley made notes, and to assure her of their personal loyalty. The Queen was obliged to go on without them if she went further into the dubious business.

Shocked by their attitude, Elizabeth took counsel with herself, but her judgment was warped by her distress. The habitual coquette was brought stark up against an agonizing fact, coldly set forth in these notes of her council: "In years the Queen might be his mother. Doubtfulness of issue more than before. Few old maids escape." But she could not yet accept the disability expressed in these words. How differently the question had presented itself in for-





SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery

mer years when she had been the unwilling party! Breathlessly she fanned the flames within herself until they flared up in a dying conflagration.

V

In the winter of 1581 she once more summoned Alençon. Leaving his post of duty in Holland, braving the prohibition of his whole family, he crossed the Channel again in obedience to the siren. This time there was no incognito. He came with a retinue from Holland, and an official embassy from Paris accompanied him. Since he was bent on taking the risk, his mother and his brother decided to support him. Though he had partly escaped their leading strings, he was still a scion of the house of Valois and as such was not to be thrown to the English lions. The lions themselves perceived this, all but the rampant lioness, half-blinded by her conflict.

As the affianced consort of the English sovereign, Alençon had been a great factor in Holland. Thinking to please Her Majesty, the Hollanders had offered him the sovereignty. Elizabeth, who had steadily declined to accept the sovereignty for herself, was enraged by their courtesy. She had no wish to send her lover back to France with this trophy; yet she did not care to rule the Dutch herself. It was a desperate dilemma, but her yearning "to marry and have a child of her own to inherit, and so to continue the

line of Henry the Eighth" decided her. In spite of the luke-warmness of her council she summoned the Duke of Alençon to England.

This time her young visitor did his own wooing. He was as importunate as any affianced suitor of a reluctant bride could be. He knew that the world was watching him and prophesying his failure and he was also probably in love with the lady herself. There is no hint that Alençon's interest ever wandered from this extraordinary attachment, which began in his youth. In spite of his ambition and that of his mother, his love was genuine, and, for all her juggling, Elizabeth's heart was touched. The ensuing fiasco was an equal tragedy for both, though both were not equally endued with powers of recovery.

The Queen's anguish was intense. The young man was making love to her in physical terms. "You must not threaten a poor old woman in her own kingdom," she whimpered distractedly; "passion, not reason, speaks in you or I would think you mad. I beg you not to use such dreadful words." Alençon was weeping, too. She gave him her pocket-handkerchief. "Nay, madam," he said, wiping his eyes, "you mistake my meaning. I meant that I would rather be cut in pieces than not marry you, and so be laughed at by the world."

Elizabeth's misery was increased by the compliant attitude of the French court. Faithfully it seconded the suit of Alençon, removing every diplomatic ob-

stacle which Elizabeth could raise. Catherine de Medici played her hand valiantly. While Elizabeth held her youngest son as hostage, she granted everything. At last the English Queen, driven to the wall, demanded the restitution of Calais. As if there was anything in all the world which, as a monarch, she really wanted less! But it served at least to halt the terrifying French advance.

There was only a momentary lull, however. In the midst of the entertainments which revived in Whitehall the gallant days of Wolsey, the Queen grew wan and haggard. Like a middle-aged Ophelia, she wandered about, wringing her hands and talking to herself. She had already paid a hundred thousand pounds to renew the league with France. If she failed now to go through with the marriage, the damages would be staggering. It made her thrifty Tudor blood run cold.

She trusted nobody. "It has been said in France," she told the French Ambassador, "that Monsieur would do well to marry the old creature, who had had for the last year an ulcer in her leg, which was not yet healed, and never could be cured; and, under that pretext, they could send me a potion from France of such a nature that he would find himself a widower in the course of five or six months, and after that he could please himself by marrying the Queen of Scotland and remain the undisputed sovereign of the united realms." Yet she told her councillors

in the next breath that any Frenchman who crossed her in this marriage was a bad subject and an enemy to the realm. This constant vacillation devastated her. Her prolonged shilly-shallying had passed the bounds of sanity, and her state was growing morbid.

On the 22d of November 1561 she brought the painful farce to an abrupt end by a *reductio ad absurdum* of all that had gone before. The French Ambassador came to her in the morning, as she was walking in the gallery with her betrothed, and forced from her a public declaration. The harassed woman, then and there, in the presence of Walsingham, Leicester, and a number of courtiers, declared that she would be Alençon's wife. They exchanged rings and kissed each other on the mouth after the manner of a pair who had just been declared man and wife. If Elizabeth had yielded to Alençon that night, the world would not have questioned the legality of their union. In Paris it was reported to have been an actual wedding. "Our King received tidings yesterday from England," said the writer of the Fugger news-letter, "that his brother was married to the Queen on the 22d day of the month. Some say they have already slept together."

But the Queen had ventured beyond her depth. "Two more such nights as the last," she said the next day to Alençon, "will bring me to the grave." The Privy Council began to take a hand. They tried to

persuade the deluded youth to return to Holland, but they could not move him. It required the combined efforts of all of England's best statesmen, pulling hard together, to rescue the Queen from her predicament. Alençon lingered, not as if of his own will, but as if paralysed. The Privy Council pulled the diplomatic strings and had him named ruler of Brabant, hoping that this might satisfy the prediction of the soothsayer. But still the former Hercules would not give up his adolescent dream of ruling over England. He was at last almost forcibly deported by a group of Elizabeth's councillors, who functioned as an escort. The Earl of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Hunsden, and Sir John Norris accompanied him in state back to Holland. Elizabeth rode by his side as far as Canterbury, where she took leave of him like a heartbroken bride whose hero has been snatched away by war. She told him that he was to write to her as his wife.

The Duke of Alençon does not stand out in history as a great hero. His subsequent career in Holland was mean-spirited and desperate and disgraced by treachery. No one had a good word for him, least of all his own family. His once beloved sister slandered him in her memoirs. Only Queen Elizabeth kept up a show of respect for him afterwards, until, after three years of maddened blundering, he died at Château-Thierry.

A poem which she composed soon after his departure shows what she had learned through him of love:

I grieve, yet dare not show my discontent;
I love, and yet am forced to seem to hate;
I dote, but dare not what I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, yet inwardly do prate;
I am, and am not — freeze, and yet I burn;
Since from myself my other self I turn.

My care is like my shadow in the sun —
Follows me flying — flies when I pursue it;
Stands and lives by me — does what I have done;
This too familiar care doth make me rue it.
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppressed.

Some gentler passion steal into my mind
(For I am soft, and made of melting snow);
Or be more cruel, love, or be more kind;
Or let me float or sink, be high or low;
Or let me live with some more sweet content;
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant.

Chapter VIII

ELIZABETH AND THE PURITANS

I

Anne Boleyn's daughter was brought up in a Catholic nursery. Her foster-mother, the middle-aged Dame Bryan, was indifferent to the new religious tendencies, and her father, Henry the Eighth, only partly shared the beliefs of which he was a patron. It was not until the Seymours assumed the guardianship of her and her brother Edward that the Protestant influence was seriously exerted on her life. Though this was intense while it lasted, Elizabeth never felt it as keenly as did Edward and Lady Jane Grey, who were both prigs by nature. Queen Elizabeth was not so. She was too much a child of the Seymours to be a Roman Catholic; yet she was too much her father's daughter to be an extreme Protestant. In religion, as in other things, she was forced to compromise.

Her secretary, Lord Burghley, was moderate like herself. They were both good examples of English liberalism, a state of mind which flourishes as well nowhere else. Fanatics like Queen Mary and the zealous Puritans have never been at home in that cool atmosphere. Like the bright scentless flowers which grow in English pastures, temperateness flourishes in

England's religion. Those who have gone to extremes in either direction have drawn their inspiration from foreign countries. Mary drew it from the spirit of her Spanish ancestress, the heroic Isabella who drove the Moorish infidel out of Spain. The only English Protestants who could match Mary in religious zeal were those who fled to the continent during her reign. In places like Frankfurt, Strassburg, and Antwerp they became fanatical in matters of faith. They were the Bolsheviks of that age. The accession of Elizabeth was the signal for these absentees to flow back to England. They came back as developed propagandists of the new belief.

They had a definite organization and a peculiar style of dress and speech. They were called, for the severity and plainness of their habits, precisionists or Puritans. Through their underground meetings and their so-called congregations they soon formed a party which braved the Queen herself. Within ten years of her accession they had defeated her on the floor of the House of Commons on the issue of free speech. Later on they made it possible for the Earl of Leicester to swing the Bond of Association like a great whip over the backs of the entire nation. No Englishman, not even the most earnest Catholic, dared to refuse to sign these bonds, by which Mary Queen of Scots might be condemned to pay the penalty for any wild assassin. The Puritans had learned from the Jesuits the art of terrorizing and were ap-



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery



plying it with equal fervour. In 1588 they were the backbone of the national uprising against the Armada. But they were never satisfied with easy victories; they were always pressing forward to the next conquest. Elizabeth estimated their purposes correctly. "I know the Calvinists to be criminals," she said, "whose desire it is to destroy allegiance to princes." She foresaw the ultimate outcome of the movement in the American Revolution.

Her Puritan contemporaries were a thorn in her side. She loved dress and display, fans, ruffs, silk stockings — and vanity was anathema to the Puritans. Flattery was the breath of her nostrils, and amusement her daily bread. These weaknesses were not spared by these precise critics. Her favourite amusement, bear-baiting, was a special object of attack. "What Christian heart can take pleasure to see the poor beast to rent, tear, and kill another, and all for his foolish pleasure?" wrote the Puritan Stubbes, the mouthpiece of his party. "And some. . . . are so far assotted that they will not stick to keep a dozen or a score of great mastiffs and bandogs, to their no small charges, for the maintenance of this goodly game, forsooth; and will not make any bones of twenty, forty, a hundred pound at once to hazard on a bet, with 'fight dog,' 'fight bear' — say they — the devil part all. And, to be plain, I think the devil is the master of the same." It was not sufficient for the Puritan that a sport was extravagant

and cruel. It was a sin, a mystery, an evil for which the soul must pay the penalty through all eternity.

At fifteen Elizabeth had felt that she had a "soul to save as well as other folks." But she was writing then to Sir Edward Seymour, a forerunner of the ultra-Puritans, and probably reflected her correspondent's point of view. As Queen, she had long since laid this attitude aside, together with the plain habit which she then affected. The beruffed and bewigged sovereign had little in common with the plain Princess of those days. She had thrown off care and melancholy. She had given up self-scrutiny and bowed only to the force of external circumstances, sometimes managing marvellously to evade the latter. Small wonder that she detested the long-faced, plainly-clad Puritans, who made a fetish of solemnity and censoriousness.

When she threatened in her folly to marry a Catholic husband — for Alençon, to his other faults, added this religious obstacle — the Puritans naturally trembled in their square-toed shoes. The fires of Smithfield and the massacres of Paris were vivid memories. Sir Philip Sidney, the peerless, white-souled knight, wrote her a stern letter of warning, to which Elizabeth responded with well-controlled silence. His humble colleague of Lincoln's Inn, John Stubbs, the barrister, wrote a pamphlet in the same cause, and it was the last thing that he ever wrote with his good right hand. It was cut in the market-place in the presence

of an awe-struck crowd. Before he fainted, the mutilated zealot waved his tall hat in the air with his remaining hand and shouted stentoriously: "God save the Queen."

This was not merely the perfunctory homage required of all martyrs to justice at the time. The stern brotherhood of Puritans was inherently loyal to the Protestant Queen. They were the common people of England, and Elizabeth was, in a sense, their representative on the throne. Vague and shadowy as Anne Boleyn was in the people's memory, she had sponsored the Reformation in England, encouraged the English Bible, and been charitable to the poor. To her daughter she had left a silent but powerful heritage — the traces of a low origin which joined her to the common run. The party of the people always felt that Elizabeth belonged to them.

II

Unfortunately, portrait-painting did not flourish in England at that time. There was no Rubens or Soest to preserve on canvas the Puritan figures of Elizabeth's time. Otherwise as sombre a group of burghers as ever stared down at us from Dutch walls might be seen today in the National Portrait Gallery. Sir Anthony Cooke and Sir John Cheke, immortal teachers of the Greek accent; Sir Francis Knollys, the lean, and Sir Thomas Heneage, the fat, but both

equally restrained in the matter of ruffs; Sir Thomas Smith and Sir Thomas Randolph, smacking a little of the urbane world as ambassadors should; Sir John Norris and Sir Henry Killigrew, country squires, rather too ready with their fire-arms; the Earl of Bedford with his large head; and, the most serious and intense face of all, that of Sir Francis Walsingham — these would all cluster darksomely around the gaudily dressed Queen.

One of them only hangs actually in her vicinity. Like an attendant spirit, Sir Francis Walsingham looks down from an upper wall with his hollow, sallow face and penetrating eyes. Gazing into them, one is reminded that "still waters run deep." The depths of this English statesman have still to be sounded. A man of genius in his way, an invalid nearly all his days, he was one of the guiding forces of the Elizabethan age. His education was typical of his times. Two years at Cambridge were followed by religious exile and wanderings on the continent, which took him as far as Italy. He studied law at the University of Padua and acquired in Italy a skilful trade — that of espionage. On his return to England he built up a vast spy-system ramifying to the remotest parts of Catholic Europe, even to the college of cardinals itself.

Burghley employed him for his languages and for this talent. Walsingham was also foot-loose from early practice; he could travel easily. Burghley was a stay-at-home and needed a Mercury. He was in-

sular and needed a man of the world. Walsingham served admirably for all these purposes and soon became indispensable to the Secretary of State. With a stone in his kidney, Sir Francis was nevertheless ready to fare forth when circumstances required it. He shirked no duty, no matter how devious and dubious, in the interest of the Protestant State. Unlike Burghley, he had never compromised in the matter of religion. On the contrary, he had followed the enemy into his own country and had learned there to turn the tables on him.

Elizabeth hated Walsingham, and small wonder. His Machiavellian tactics did not include flattery. He was blunt and honest on the surface, uncourtier-like in his address. His lack of grace and polish and his stern consistency were equally detestable to the Queen. While she only swore at Burghley, she threw her slipper at Walsingham's face. She would have liked to murder him many a time for a devotion that was so unfailing and so impersonal. He was ready to lie, cheat, and torture for her sake, but never to frame a compliment or bandy repartee. In subtle but merciless ways he knew how to put the screws on her. It is a question, whether, in the last years of his life, he did not force great issues and precipitate decisions of great historic import — things for which Queen Elizabeth takes all the praise and blame in history.

With inexhaustible patience Walsingham assembled and marshalled his forces. He wove his nets fine



and flung them wide. In time they brought him a glittering prize. This was no less a person than the Queen's great favourite, the Earl of Leicester. The conversion of Lord Leicester to the Puritan party is one of the unexplained phenomena of the times. But it followed the marriage of his nephew to the daughter of the Puritan chief, for Walsingham may be accounted as the party leader. Sir Philip Sidney, the chivalrous poet, had grown up in the atmosphere of the reformed religion and had imbibed its principles from earliest youth. His marriage with Walsingham's daughter was a natural outgrowth of a common religious faith. As usual, the Dudleys moved *en masse* and the whole clan flocked to Walsingham's support in Sir Philip's wake. It included incidentally the celebrated Earl, who, in the days of his greatest glory, never strayed far from the family fold.

Henceforth the crow and the peacock worked together. Sir Francis Walsingham and the Earl of Leicester were underground colleagues. In the year following his nephew's marriage Leicester launched the compulsory Bond of Association, an act which bears the mark of a fierce fanatic's hand. A year later still, Leicester went to the aid of the beleaguered Dutch, while Walsingham stayed at home and plied his trade. Afterwards, when his son-in-law, Sir Philip Sidney, was killed at the front, he assumed all of his enormous debts and finally wore himself out in the paying of them.

III

For almost twenty-five years, the Queen had staved off open war on the continent. But it is a long lane that has no turning, and war had come at last. Almost with an air of relief she stepped forth after the Alençon crisis and assumed the aggressive. Her pacifist policy was laid aside for the time being and she boasted like a general and a swashbuckler. "By God," she said to the Spanish Ambassador, "I will have the treaty of Ghent allowed, or I will stand by the States as long as I have a man in the realm to fight for them." And she cleared her throat and spat as she said it.

The Dutch wars were a triumph of Puritan policy. The Queen sent the Earl of Leicester to Holland as her Lieutenant-General. By his selection even more than by her bold attitude the sovereign showed that she was serious. She wrote to the States that she was sending "a man of such quality as all the world knows, and one whom I love as if he were my own brother." With fifty ships and a splendid retinue Leicester set sail for the Lowlands. The gorgeous costume of the courtier was plunged into the mire of military service. Like Henry the Eighth, who once crossed the Channel with cloth-of-gold sails, Leicester swam through the Holland mists in jewellery and ostrich feathers. His fleecy ruffs and satin doublets, slashed and embroidered to the last degree, his velvet cloaks and

richly caparisoned horses were a strange sight for the sober Hollanders. Even his ponderous suits of mail were of exquisite workmanship.

It was Leicester's first campaign and he was nearing fifty-four. He had never seen any active military service. His brother, the Earl of Warwick, had been sent to France to aid the Huguenots, but the Earl had been tied to Elizabeth's apron-strings. His royal mistress, who so often protested that she despised a man who sat at home in the cinders, would never allow her favourite to venture beyond the tilt-yard. If on this occasion he had not been recently married, perhaps she would have been slower to commission him. As long as Elizabeth loved a man, she demanded his daily attendance. When she allowed him to wander at all, it was a bad omen for his standing with her. As long as the Earl of Leicester remained in Holland and left his new spouse at home, his relations with the Queen seem to have been unaffected. It was when the Countess prepared to join him that the storm arose.

Elizabeth wrote almost tenderly to Leicester: "Rob — I am afraid you will suppose, by my wandering writings, that a midsummer's moon hath taken large possession of my brains this month, but you must needs take things as they come into my head, though order be left behind me. When I remember your request to have a discreet and honest man that may carry my mind and see how all goes there, I have

chosen this bearer, Thomas Wilkes, whom you know and have made good trial of. I have fraught him full of my conceipts of these country matters, and imparted which way I mind to take, and what is fit for you to use. I am sure you can credit him and so I will be short with these few notes. . . . Now will I end that do imagine I talk still with you, and therefore loathly say farewell one hundred thousand times, though ever I pray God to bless you from all harm, and save you from all foes. With my million and legion of thanks for all your pains and cares — as you know, ever the same E. R."

The accepted story of Leicester's campaign in Holland is a long and, on the whole, an untrustworthy history. The facts are lost in a fog of partisanship. The best horseman in England, the matchless jouster and tilter of his generation, has borne for many years the reputation of having been a failure on the battlefield. Yet no evidence has been forthcoming to prove the point. His defenders have unhappily followed the same course as his detractors. They have adduced no facts to rehabilitate him. Just what Leicester said and did during the events which took place in Holland has not as yet been stated by impartial history.

That the Dutch campaign was a great ordeal is very apparent. The Queen had sent him forth as her *alter ego,* but she was not whole-heartedly behind him. How could she be? What was Holland to Queen Elizabeth, or she to Holland? While she joined the

English Puritans in their wish to defeat Spain, she had no religious interest in the Dutch Protestants. A little body of ardent Puritans was leading the way, and Elizabeth was forced into the role of a reluctant follower. Her position was complicated and her policy shifted accordingly from day to day. Too far from her presence to follow her swift changes, the Earl of Leicester was at a loss politically. His greatest blunder — if he really made it — was in the acceptance of the post of Governor-General of the United States of the Netherlands without Elizabeth's consent. Under the Queen of England's nose the Calvinists had virtually elected a president.

For some time previously Lord Leicester had been out of touch with the Queen. But he had at the same time been in touch with the Countess of Leicester, for she was making preparations to join him. With a loss of judgment, which she had apparently communicated to her husband, she rode through the London streets as if she were a queen, while collecting the impedimenta of a royal personage. Simultaneously with the news of Lady Leicester's progress came reports of the Earl's strange proceedings in Holland. He had boasted that, but for the injustice of his sentence, his brother would have sat on the throne of England. Elizabeth was probably as much surprised as outraged by the new developments in her old friend's behaviour. The former urbane courtier was reported as going to chapel every day like

the most rigid pietist and larding his conversation with religious phrases. However well or otherwise the Earl may have fulfilled his general mission in Holland, he was certainly suffering at this time from delusions of grandeur.

Needless to say Elizabeth was furious. In a transport of rage she dispatched Sir Thomas Heneage to the front with orders to Leicester to resign his honours at once and in public. But Sir Thomas Heneage, himself a zealous Puritan, temporized with the situation and excused the Earl. "Do that you are bidden," wrote the Queen in her own hand, "and leave your considerations for your own affairs; for in some things you had clear commandment which you did not, and in others none and did. . . . I am assured of your dutiful thoughts, but I am utterly at squares with this childish dealing."

This was the opportunity for which Leicester's enemies had waited. As time passed and the Earl still hesitated to obey her orders, they helped to fan Elizabeth's fury. Leicester's family was terrified, foreseeing complete downfall and worse for their relative. His brother wrote: "Well, our mistress's rage doth increase rather than diminish, and she giveth out great threatening words against you. Therefore make the best assurance you can for yourself, and trust not her oath, for that her malice is great and unquenchable is the wisest of their opinions here, and as for other friendships, as far as I can learn, it is as

doubtful as the other. Wherefore, my good brother, repose your whole trust in God, and He will defend you in despite of all your enemies. . . . Once more, have a great care for yourself — I mean for your safety — and if she will needs revoke you to the overthrowing of the cause, if I were as you, if I could not be assured *there,* I would go to the farthest part of Christendom, rather than come into England again. Take heed whom you trust, for that you have some false boys about you."

Leicester's reply to this counsel was to take the first ship to England. Without waiting to be revoked, abandoning all his honours as well as his duties and responsibilities, he fled straight home to England and Elizabeth's feet. "There was more of Mercury than Mars in him," said a sardonic commentator at a later date. This was a misleading statement as far as his precipitate retreat from Holland was concerned. Other men have been court-martialed for less, yet Leicester saved himself by it. He was no longer to be diverted from his proper channels by false advice. The scales had fallen from his eyes and he realized that he understood his mistress better than anyone else.

The significance of his return from Holland was deeper than was at first realized. It produced a profound and lasting reconciliation between himself and the Queen. The rift between them, if one may judge from the warmth of their reunion, had been very

great. Leicester had gone to the lengths of an uncongenial marriage; Elizabeth had coquetted to the verge of the marriage bed. But their mutual adventuring was now at an end. Simier and Alençon had vanished like thistle-down in the wind or like a phantom at cock-crow. The she-wolf had disgorged her victim, and Elizabeth beheld once more her faithful Leicester at her side. Altered by the years and his adventures as he was, he quickly fell back into his accustomed position. The Countess of Leicester, with her trains of ermine and her saddle-horses, did not join her husband in Holland. The differences between the two became acute and public and the court gossiped continually about their disagreements. So bitter grew their relations that not long afterwards, when Lord Leicester died, it was rumoured that his wife had poisoned him.

Meanwhile the old harmony between Leicester and the Queen had been re-established. White-haired, red-faced, and corpulent, the Earl had lost the manly beauty for which he had been famous. But in Elizabeth's fond eyes his charm seems to have been undimmed. Serene in the renewal of their old intimacy and confidence, they faced a boiling, seething world, eructating incessant threats of war from Spain. Philip had at last been brought to this definite step by English intervention in Holland. It was high time for Leicester to return to his Queen. He was most needed where she had always had him, to help her in person

to face that oncoming dread, the long-threatened Spanish invasion. Younger and far different men were needed for the smoke and heat of battle. Though Leicester and the Queen did not realize it, they were both already half-way on the shelf. Their part was to continue the royal, heroic gestures which both of them had practised for thirty years. Far below the obvious surface of events anonymous figures were grimly directing the course of history.

Yet everyone except the Queen could see that Leicester's sands were running out, the Countess of Leicester among the others. His logical successor, after the death of his own son, had been Sir Philip Sidney, who had died at Zutphen. The next logical heir was Lettice's son by her first marriage.

The young Earl of Essex, while still in his teens, had already campaigned with Leicester in Holland. His career was unfolding swiftly like a bud in too much sunshine; he was a raw substance to be shaped, an uncharted life to be guided and fashioned. For his aspiring mother the youth spelled opportunity. In launching his career she found consolation for her loss and solace for her pride. The Earl of Essex gradually became her approach to the Queen as well as her weapon against her. She used her son as she had used her husband previously.

Chapter IX

MARY STUART

I

Mary Stuart had a reputation for great beauty, yet others besides her English cousin Elizabeth have questioned it. "Marie was beautiful," said George Sand, "but red-haired." She had her Tudor ancestry to thank for that and in England it would not have been held against her. But her portraits do not otherwise sustain her reputation. The long list of her lovers seems to constitute her best claim to beauty, and even this may have been due rather to her desire to please than to the harmony of her features. This trait came out in the ingratiating manners which were second nature to her from her earliest childhood.

At the court of France, where Mary was brought up, she must have figured more or less as a country cousin. One of her efforts to vindicate herself was to acquire much learning and to show it off. Her Latin and French, according to Brantôme, were excellent and he afterwards cited this as evidence when letters which she wrote to her lover Bothwell were produced against her. He insisted that they were not half good enough to have been written by the adolescent Mary, much less by the Queen of Scots. Though Brantôme

was probably not critical of a royal mistress, we may assume that Mary Stuart was almost if not quite as learned as the daughters of Henry the Eighth and was probably inspired, moreover, by their unfeminine example. Beneath the overlay of Guise and Stuart, the girl was a good deal of a Tudor and showed it in other ways besides her colouring.

The list of Mary's lovers is a long one, but she ran through them all in seven years. They belong to the tragic period of her short sojourn in Scotland. The air of that raw, northern climate seems to have acted like an aphrodisiac on her complicated nature. Chastelard, Gordon, Rizzio, Darnley — all loved her and died for her in Scotland, while Bothwell perished in exile and insanity. It was a bloody drama, and the part she played in it is impossible to understand. At times she behaved like a moral imbecile. Chastelard and Gordon were first led on and then turned over to her half-brother for instant execution. Of Rizzio's murder she was at least innocent, but she made no effort to defend him. Her passion for Darnley, which, while it lasted, was fully as great as her subsequent infatuation with Bothwell, turned into abysmal hatred. Curiously enough, her relations with her half-brother, the Earl of Murray, showed the same violent change of attitude. Through all her inexplicable attachments runs the same vein of docility. Like a child she turned toward her half-brother and followed him home from France with a lamblike trustfulness. Later on the

reckless Bothwell won the same allegiance. With each new demigod in her life the last one turned into a devil, as, for instance, her final hatred for the once-beloved Murray was shocking in its intensity. When he died at last at the hands of an assassin, she gave a pension to the man who murdered him. Gordon, Chastelard, Rizzio, Darnley, Bothwell, had all vanished into nothingness, and Murray was soon to follow them, when the curtain finally rang down on the turbulent Scotch tragedy, and Mary fled to England.

Why she chose this country instead of France for her asylum is a much-mooted question. She was indeed between the devil and the deep blue sea. The Scotch had dethroned her and crowned her year-old son at Holyrood. They had no place for Mary but an island prison. The way was open to France, but at the end of it was her foster-mother and mother-in-law, Catherine de Medici, and France was not large enough to hold both of these women. The harassed Mary knew it well from long experience. She did not know, but was to learn, that England was likewise too small for her and Elizabeth. As Dowager Queen of France, as Queen of Scots and pretender to the throne of England, Mary had manœuvred herself into a position where she had nowhere to lay her head. The claimant to three thrones, she had lost them all by her rash and feckless tactics. Her career has established her as one of the great romantic heroines of history, but does not

justify her reputation for character or judgment. Pursued by ill luck and dominated by a perverse genius, she seemed to have no faculty for breaking their spell. She ever chose the worse instead of the better turning, and as her doom caught up with her, all outlets became desperate. Her dash for the English border was her last expedient.

II

Elizabeth, hearkening from London, was long accustomed to the rumble of bad news from Scotland. Staggering reports from there had come to be almost a matter of daily occurrence — astringent fare that had to be digested. In spite of their sensational character, few of them were inaccurate. An exception to this was the report that Mary was going to have a child by Bothwell. Leicester himself brought the rumour to Elizabeth. "Her majesty somewhat mused at it," said Leicester, "and thinks it will greatly touch her, appearing so soon after the marriage whereby it will be thought that all was not well before." But Mary had no child by Bothwell, though all was certainly not well before. She came empty-handed to England.

Whoever brought the tidings of her arrival must have met with something stronger than a musing commentary. The letters in which Mary implored the Queen for her protection could not veil for one single moment that she had come to England without an in-

vitation. The diamond which Elizabeth had sent her as a pledge of her friendship and which Mary now returned in eloquent petition could not wipe out the memory that Mary had been denied a passport when she last asked for it. And, though Mary had often assured Bothwell that she would go to the ends of the world with him in her petticoat, it was in the last analysis with Elizabeth that she now proposed to elope in that condition. Whether Elizabeth's chivalry was great enough to overlook these handicaps is doubtful, although she afterwards referred to Mary as "the bird that, to escape the pursuit of the hawk, had fled to her feet for protection." She had a keen appreciation of her advantages, even in the most poignant circumstances.

It is impossible to say whether Elizabeth behaved generously to the refugee or not in the matter of wearing apparel. The dresses which she sent by Lady Scrope may or may not have been as worn and out of date as Mary's friends aver. The story probably reflects not so much the facts as Mary's first disillusionment with her fairy godmother. On the other hand, it is possible that Elizabeth, foreseeing bitter consequences, regretted the diamond token which had got her into this trouble and decided to be more conservative with her presents and promises in the future. The important thing at present was to stop Mary in her tracks before she took another step toward London. At Carlisle, where the Queen of Scots had halted, she

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was courteously but firmly transformed into a prisoner. Sir Francis Knollys, whom Elizabeth sent to welcome her, accomplished the transformation. There was no arrest, but a sort of moral quarantine. The Queen of Scots, said Elizabeth tersely, could not be received at court with fitting honours while half the world still believed that she had murdered her husband. There was obvious truth in what she said.

A hearing followed, which took place partly at York before Elizabeth's commissioners and partly in London in the Queen's presence. It was made memorable by the production of the famous Casket Letters. They were Mary's letters to Bothwell and she had asked him to burn them, a request which only made bad matters worse when they fell into the hands of her enemies. The Earl of Murray, her half-brother, showed them reluctantly. Both family and national pride were at stake, but English statesmanship was too much for him. With deadly sureness the men of Elizabeth wrested his secret from him. The tell-tale documents passed out of his possession, and the mulcted Scotsman went sadly home without them.

In the days when Elizabeth was being tried for conspiracy with Seymour, one letter such as these would have cost her her life. But Mary was *schreibselig*. She sat up late at night penning long, intimate messages. "The King sent for Joachim," she wrote to her lover, "and asked him why I did not lodge nigh to him. [In another letter, she had complained of

Darnley's evil-smelling breath.] And that he would rise the sooner [from his sick-bed] if that were so; and why had I come, and was it for a good appointment? and why I had not brought Paris and Gilbert with me to write. And that I would send Joseph away. I wonder who it was told him so much." Elizabeth read Mary's deep protestations of loyalty and affection, the promises of complete obedience addressed to the ne'er-do-well Bothwell; she also read the pathetic words of Darnley, so strangely repeated by Mary, in which he piteously besought her for her companionship; she read the various references to a rendezvous to which Mary was about to conduct the doomed and despised husband — and cancelled the proceedings. "In sum, he will not come with me, except upon condition that I will promise him . . . that I shall leave him no more. . . ." Thus out of her own mouth Mary condemned herself. As there had been no arrest, there was now no verdict. The Queen of England and her council did exactly what the Scotch government had already done — they suppressed the letters and tightened Mary's imprisonment. Elizabeth sent her to Tutbury, ancient, mouldy, and insanitary, and tried to forget about her.

It was impossible. That the Queen of Scots was on English soil was a fact that nobody could forget for a moment. There were Catholic uprisings in the north and Catholic conspiracies in the south. Mary was penalized, but, as she had a talent for bringing

misfortune upon herself, she also had a gift for bearing it with fortitude. The friends whom she had lost through Darnley's death now flocked back to her standard with enthusiasm. The Pope, the Spanish Emperor, and English exiles on the Continent began to take her part again; the saintly Campion perished beautifully, like Jesus, redeeming by his death one of the most courageous if one of the most foolish of women. Mary was enthroned again and this time for all ages. Posterity could never cast her down again.

Elizabeth was distracted and her council befuddled. The sad business of the Duke of Norfolk grew out of their bewilderment. Under the Queen's very nose, around the corner in the next corridor, her councillors drew up a plan to marry Mary Stuart to the premier Duke of England. In Greenwich Palace, following a regular council meeting, they adjourned to a private conclave and thrashed out a definite scheme to this effect. Mary, always complaisant in these matters, had signified her willingness, and the sensitive Norfolk, who had once fluttered too close to Mary's candle, accepted the rôle assigned to him. He begged his confederates to go with him to Elizabeth that together they might tell her all. But no one dared, and the Duke of Norfolk fell into a chill of terror at the thought of facing her unsupported. The faint-hearted nobleman, tool and victim from the first, began with his fellow councillors and ended with the Spanish agents.

"If I permit this marriage," said Elizabeth, who did not need to be told of it, "I shall be in the Tower before four months are over."

It was Leicester as usual who laid bare the whole story to her. Elizabeth was furious. Norfolk was her cousin, and ever since her coronation he had carried the sword before her. In her presence he had scoffed at the idea of Mary's innocence in the matter of poor Darnley — he would never trust himself to *that* pillow, he had said — and now he was ready to marry the treacherous woman. It was a flattering tribute to Mary's attractiveness, there was no denying that. Elizabeth imprisoned him. Notwithstanding all his orders — including the Garter and St. Michael's — he went to the Tower. Two years later she beheaded him. He died for treason, with a slip of the tongue on his lips. "Build Thou the walls of England," instead of "Jerusalem," he prayed.

It was Elizabeth's first taste of blood. She had been fond of Norfolk, whose grandfather had come home from the continent to attend her christening, and whose grandmother had carried her in her arms to the baptismal font. He had seen him daily at court and the head which fell on Tower Hill was familiar to her in every feature, the eyes which could not meet her own, the sensitive lips which dared not open in her presence. But he had plotted with the Spaniards against her and he had given a man's utmost testimony to the charms of Mary Stuart. Nevertheless she

could not bring herself to take his life away. Once she signed his death-warrant and recalled it at midnight, and months went by while the doomed Norfolk suffered the tortures of suspense. His death at last produced a lull in the war between Elizabeth and her rival, and while the strange hush lasted, Elizabeth took a desperate leap. She began her ten years' struggle to marry the Duke of Alençon.

III

When Elizabeth had recovered sufficiently from this great fiasco to look about again, the scene had shifted considerably. The ugly little princeling whom Mary had left in Scotland had grown to early manhood, or at least to a stage of adolescence which passed for manhood among royalty. Through feuds, assassinations, abductions, he had passed unscathed. James had something of the fibre of his cousin Elizabeth — a toughness and persistency which makes for survival. It may have been due partly to the rather bourgeois upbringing which both of them, as royal children, had accidentally experienced. The Boleyn and the Erskine families had surrounded their orphaned cradles with homely influences, with the result that both of them grew up, like adopted children, to be sure, but with a firm foothold. There was something rather coarsely indigenous in their natures. James was as Scotch as Elizabeth was English, and they both spoke



PHILIP THE SECOND, KING OF SPAIN. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery

their native languages with a broad and homely accent.

The outstanding bond between them was their Protestantism — a bond that was all the stronger because they had been reared in it. The world was beginning to appreciate this harmony about the time when Alençon, who was not so very much older than young James, was saying his last farewell to England. It must have struck Elizabeth with force after this last and irrevocable parting. "I shall never marry," she said, slapping Sir William Drury on the back, "but I will ever bear good will and favour to those who have liked and furthered the same."

This was welcome news to Walsingham who had spent his last years of health acting as a buffer between Elizabeth and Alençon's family. The broken, ageing man was now back in England, saddled with menacing diseases. Elizabeth, although in better health than he, was going to die some day, and possibly before him. She had so identified herself in her own mind and in the minds of others with her father that it was generally assumed that she would die at the same age. Henry the Eighth died at fifty-seven. Elizabeth was now fifty, and for the first and only time in her life she looked the succession question fairly in the face. Walsingham was sent to Scotland.

In the bleak, cold fall of 1583 the Puritan statesman made a memorable journey to the northern kingdom. Literally on his last legs, he rode in a chariot

and progressed by slow, easy stages. But through all his discomforts and sufferings the man of conscience was upborne by the thought of his splendid retinue. One hundred and fifty horses accompanied him. There was something of Wolsey's pride in him, for all his Puritan preciseness. He dared to snub the King's best friend by giving the young man a paste diamond instead of a real stone such as the other members of the court received. He patiently pursued his aim, that of having a private audience with the King — until James finally perceived the intent and arranged it. When Walsingham came out from the long tête-à-tête, he was almost enthusiastic. He took his old friend Melville by the hand and professed himself "the best content man that could be, for he had spoken with a notable young prince, ignorant of nothing. . . ." "It could not be perceived," adds Melville, somewhat naïvely, describing the visit in his memoirs, "what was his errand, save that he gave His Majesty good counsel. But he, being religious and of a good conscience, was desirous to see and understand assuredly such qualifications to be in His Majesty, whereof he had frequently been informed."

James the Sixth of Scotland was a man after Walsingham's own heart. The enthusiasm of the dour statesman for the young King, whose name was to go down in history coupled with that of the English Bible, is not hard to comprehend. It was as if the dynasty had produced an ideal monarch, one

whom the country — that is, the existing government — would have itself elected. But the dynasty had also, and less thoughtfully, produced an opposition candidate. Nine years younger than Elizabeth, Mary was waiting quietly at Sheffield for the death of the Queen, who, the soothsayers had said, "coming to lose her monthly period, would very soon die." And even if nature did not take her off thus precipitately, she was every day in danger of assassination. It is not to be supposed that this family situation, obvious as it was, remained untouched upon in the interview between James and his visitor. If only in the form of unuttered thoughts and mutual attitudes, it must have entered into their discussion. More openly, presumably, they approached the question of an allowance. Five thousand pounds a year was a brave income in those days and even four thousand, to which Elizabeth afterwards shaved it down, was a living wage. When James signed the Anglo-Scottish League, two years later, he got this sum and a carefully guarded promise of the English succession. It was a great concession for Elizabeth and shows that in her mind at least the question was settled.

IV

On a fine summer day in 1586 Mary Stuart was arrested. She was shooting at the moment, probably at wild cattle in the neighbourhood of Chartley. Her

health was most capricious. Half the time she was crippled with rheumatism, taking baths at Buxton; at other times she rode to hounds, leapt fences, dived under branches, and sat her horse like a girl of eighteen. She had, in short, the characteristics of her years, the dangerous age upon which she was entering and from which Elizabeth was emerging. The time of desperate actions had overtaken her.

She was charged with a conspiracy against the Queen's life. Letters — alas! her fatal propensity — were brought in evidence. This time the incriminating documents were found in a beer cask, in the dry space between a true and a false bottom. Walsingham and his spies had devised the hiding-place. Mary's defenders sometimes say that he also wrote the letters. It seems unlikely that he went so far as to forge the whole of them, though he may have contributed some interpolations, changed a few sentences. It was a method much in vogue in those days. Elizabeth was always on her guard against the practice, filling up her vacant spaces with hieroglyphics and scroll-work. But Mary had not the same cautious temperament, certainly not at this time of her life, when she snatched breathlessly at every straw.

Her trial was held at Fotheringay in the middle of October. The court was set up in the middle of the great hall before the vast fireplace. For two days the hunted woman was magnificent. Walsingham himself was there, sitting in the background, and the two

enemies faced each other for the first time across the crowded courtroom. The witch-burner and his victim clashed instinctively. Losing her self-control, Mary accused him in burning words of plotting against her life. The indignant secretary rose self-righteously. "I call to God to witness," he said, "that as a private person I have done nothing unbeseeming an honest man, nor, as I bear the place of a public man, have I done anything unworthy of my place." As Elizabeth would have said, he was a man who "made a conscience of murder." He did not assassinate like the abhorred Jesuits, nor run amuck like the unruly Scotch, but he could dispose of his enemy just as effectively. He was an Englishman and even his crimes had to be legal.

As in her first trial, Mary was left to await the verdict while the court withdrew to London. This time it came speedily enough, borne by two galloping horsemen. They were Elizabeth's trusted though distant relative Lord Buckhurst, and Walsingham's secretary, Mr. Robert Beale. They informed Mary in official language that she had been found guilty.

In her bleak northern castle, while the November leaves were falling, Mary awaited her sentence. She was a spent creature. No further effort came from her. Already the stone walls enclosed her like a tomb.

If only Walsingham could have signed the death-warrant! But the Queen was obliged to do that with

her own hand and she would not. Walsingham took to his bed, this time in good earnest. Like Mary, he had shot his bolt. Though he was to survive her by three years, his life-work was finished.

V

Elizabeth was half crazed. Fifteen years ago she had shed the Duke of Norfolk's blood — who was little better than a woman — and it was as if she had to do it all over again. The awful conflicts of that time were renewed in her. The "bird that had flown to her from the hawk" needed only a tweak of its slender throat and it would never sing again. The thought stayed her hand. But she too had a throat, and one just as vulnerable. It was her life or Mary's. "If Elizabeth is to live Mary must die. *Aut fere, aut feri! Ne feriare feri.*" She went about muttering to herself and wringing her jewelled hands.

To make her agitation complete, emissaries began to arrive from all sides to plead for Mary's life. The French and Spanish Ambassadors besieged her. With Mendoza she made short shrift. Behind him loomed such a dark ominous figure that Elizabeth gladly turned away to confront the less terrible Frenchman. "Well, what do you think of your Queen of Scotland?" she roared at Bellièvre. But what he thought brought little comfort. The idea of sending Mary to an asylum in France, with the Valois family for se-

curity, set Elizabeth to raging again. She felt injured, abused, insulted, that it was even expected of her. She seized her pen and wrote to her good brother the King of France: "My God! — How could you be so unreasonable as to reproach the injured party. . . ?" and the more she wrote, the angrier she grew. "I beseech you to think rather of the means of maintaining, than of diminishing, my friendship," she threatened. "Your realm, my good brother, cannot abide many enemies." But the outburst did not help her to find a way out of her difficulties.

James's emissaries began to arrive in October, but they were rather slow in getting under way with their petitions. They did not see the Queen, but saw a great deal of the courteous Leicester, who was always close at hand, casually giving interviews, riding in the carriage with them to and from the Queen's audiences. Scotland was seething with indignation at James's tardiness, the French King had prodded him, and Bothwell's nephew had told him that if he did not proceed he deserved to be hanged. Moved to desperation James wrote haughty letters to London which enraged Elizabeth but did not improve his mother's chances. A reference *en passant* to Henry the Eighth's having "beheaded his bedfellows" was like a red rag to a bull. It raised such a storm in Henry's daughter that both Scotch and English were terrified. It was all that the Earl of Leicester could do to appease her. James's steady emphasis on the point that

his mother was "a sovereign prince descended on all hands of the best blood of Europe" was likewise not the most tactful approach to the daughter of Anne Boleyn. The one thing that he never said, nor even remotely hinted, was that he would break his league with her and make war on England. On the contrary, he wrote to Leicester, when the reverberations of Elizabeth's fury reached him in Edinburgh, a miserable, whining letter.

"Richt trusty and well belovit cousing," he said, "This farre shortlie may I say, I am honest, no changear of course, altogether in all thingis as I professe to be, and quhosomevir will affirme that I had ever intelligence with my mother sen the Master of Grayis being in England, or ever thocht to preferre her to my selff in the title or ever delt in any uther foreyne course, they lie falselie and unhonestlie of me. But speciallie how fonde and inconstant I were if I shulde preferre my mother to the title let all men judge. My religion ever moved me to haite her course although my honour constraynis me to insist for her lyffe. Thairfore I pray yow suspend your judgement of me least your credulitie in suche reportis do harme us both. I can nocht also omit to thank yow for your cairfull excusing to the quene the planeness of my letter . . . which she did very farre misconstrue. And thus richt trusty and well-belovit cousing I commit yow to the holy protection of the most Heich. . . ."



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE. From an old painting



It was the death-knell of Queen Mary. For though two messengers followed it, riding hard to London, the letter had preceded them. The Master of Gray and Melville arrived on New Year's Eve. With all their haste, they had paused at Ware, and when they reached London, they still delayed to ask for an audience. Listening anxiously on every side, they heard that the Queen of Scots was already dead. When Elizabeth received them six days later, they still half believed it.

"A thing long looked for should be welcome when it comes," said Her Majesty coldly. "I would now see your master's offers."

"No man makes offers but for some cause," said Gray. "We would, an please your Majesty, first know the cause to be extant for which we offer."

"I think it be extant yet," snapped Elizabeth, "but I will not promise for one hour." Then she grew angrier. "But you think to shift in that sort. . . ." Thus they parried, while the anguished woman, sitting in bleak Fotheringay, waited.

James's messengers had three audiences with the Queen. The first one was on Twelfth Night, in the midst of an entertainment, and little came of it. Four days later, at Greenwich Palace, was held the chief interview. Leicester, Hunsdon, and Lord Howard stood near the window, while Elizabeth heard the Scotchmen out. If she had had any last hopes that they would solve her quandary, she was disappointed.

They offered the same desperate remedy — to send Mary back to France — and she might have done it any time these past eighteen years! For what were bonds and guarantees and oaths of abdication to Queen Mary, or to anyone, with one foot on the scaffold. "*Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus,*" Elizabeth snarled to her councillors.

Leicester strove to put oil on the troubled waters. He pointed out the obvious fact that James would take his mother's place. The suggestion only maddened her. "Is that so?" she shouted to the trembling Scots. "Then I put myself in a worse case than I was before. My God's passion, that were to cut my own throat, and for a duchy or an earldom to yourself or such as you, you would cause some of your rascally knaves to kill me. . . ." Yet when they went to say farewell, they found her mollified. She even asked the messengers to stay on a day or two while she considered their proposals. This was England's Elizabeth.

They stayed, in fact, another fortnight. The only thing that happened was a slight but significant interview, when someone from the court, very probably Leicester, came privately to Gray and asked him a question. If Elizabeth should spare Mary's life, to gratify James, and her own life should again be endangered by Mary, would James undertake to renounce his claim to the succession? Gray had no answer to this hypothetical inquiry. He took refuge

in bluster and asked for his visitor's authority. But Leicester, presuming it was he, hastily replied that he had only asked the question in the way of conversation.

Only Elizabeth could have framed an inquiry so complex and so futile. It had the marks of her involved character and devious intellect. Alone, behind the backs of her council, she had desperately thought up a way to save Mary and herself and had surreptitiously tried it. That Mary was of use to her and that James was their common enemy, she now realized. It was the usual story of the old combining against the young; but, as ever, nothing came of it.

VI

On the first of February 1587 Elizabeth signed the death-warrant. Penning her large signature, she turned to Davison, and said, "Go and tell Walsingham. The grief thereof will go near to kill him outright."

She spent the next week horseback riding and harassing the secretary. Among other things she instructed him to write to Fotheringay and ask Mary's jailers to put her out of the way. But the Puritan jailers protested indignantly. They were doubtless well informed of the existence of the death-warrant, although the Queen had told Davison to keep it a strict secret. Bursting out petulantly at the "niceness of those precise fellows," Elizabeth went forth on her

horse again. She would find someone else to do it, she said, but the threat died away in impotence. She whined wretchedly. Why didn't her ministers do something, she asked, her nerves near to cracking. On the seventh day, Davison, knowing that the warrant was already at Fotheringay without the Queen's knowledge and Mary in the throes of her last agony, answered reassuringly that nothing more was necessary.

On the morning of the ninth day, when Elizabeth was starting for her horseback ride, she saw a much-bespattered young man ride into the courtyard. If she had any suspicions of his errand she suppressed them and galloped off. When she returned, the news was broken to her. Mary Stuart, beheaded in front of the great fireplace in the hall of Fotheringay, had been dead for twenty-four hours.

The Queen looked around for Davison, but he had disappeared. A swifter messenger than the official one had already informed him. He was not so far away, however, that the Queen's long arm could not reach him; in less than five days he was in the Tower. Certainly Walsingham and probably Burghley deserved to follow him, but they, at least, had not looked into her eyes while deceiving her. Besides, they had taken pains to involve the whole Council, which was not difficult, for, as the Master of Gray had previously reported, " I see it comes rather of her council, than herself." Elizabeth had often twitted them

with the threat of coming back when she was dead to see Mary Stuart making their heads fly from their shoulders. The jest had too much point for her statesmen to relish it. They had all been a party to dispatching the warrant without her knowledge. Too well they knew that at the last moment she might revoke her orders. The naïve Secretary, ground between the upper and the nether millstone, was left to languish in the Tower. Many literary tears have flowed over Davison's martyrdom, but he survived in spite of it to outlive Elizabeth. He died a natural death in the reign of James, who, though he had once thirsted for his blood, failed to shed it when the opportunity arrived. It is doubtful whether Davison fully earned his place among the martyrs of history.

The letter which Elizabeth wrote to James is often cited as an instance of hypocrisy, although it probably corresponded more closely to the truth than is generally credited. "My deir Brother," she began; "I wold yow knew, though not felt, the extreme dolour that overwhelmeth my mynd for that miserable accident which farre contrary to my meaning hath bene befallen. I have now sent this kinsmane of myne who er now it hath pleased yow to favour, to instruct you treuly of that which is to irksome for my penne to tell yow. I beseech yow that as God and many mo knowes how innocent I ame in this case, so yow will belewe me that if I had bidden doe it I wold have abyden by it. I ame not so base mynded that feare of any

lyving creature or Prince should mak me afrayde to doe that were in just, or done, to deny the same [the Queen was agitated]. I am not of so base a lignage nor carry so vyle a mind; but as not to disgiese fits most a king, so will I never dissemble my actions, but cause theme shew evin as I meane theme. This assuring yourself of me that as I knowe this was deserved, yit, if I had ment it, I wold never lay it one otheris sholderis, no moir will I not damnify my self that thought it not. The circumstances it may please yow to heare of this bearer. . . ."

She discreetly chose as the bearer of this letter a young man of about the same age as her Scotch kinsman and *persona grata* to him. Young Carey had been with Walsingham on his amiable Scotch visit. Elizabeth called him to her in this emergency. There was no one left to traffic with but the young and untried. Her councillors had betrayed her. Carey heard her sigh repeatedly while she wrote the letter.

Chapter X

ELIZABETH AND PHILIP FIGHT IT OUT

I

It was an accident that the Tudors did not sponsor the discovery of America. Instead of Ferdinand and Isabella, the names of Henry of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York might have been handed down to posterity in this connexion. Henry the Seventh promised his support to the brother of Columbus at the same time that the Spanish rulers promised theirs to Christopher. But for the slight advantage of the Spaniards' position, the English might as easily have sponsored the adventure.

America was an incident in the spice and pepper trade. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these commodities were so precious that prayers were offered up for their safety at sea. "In India," says a Fugger news-letter, "two more ships lay at the loading station; they are said to be bringing about sixteen thousand quintals of pepper, six thousand quintals of cloves, and one thousand quintals of cinnamon and other spices. May God grant them safe arrival." Men risked their lives to bring their precious treasure home. English heroes froze to death in the Antarctic Ocean

seeking a way to obtain spices. They stumbled into Russia, as Columbus ran into America, looking for cloves and cinnamon. Elizabeth would have had no trade agreements with the Russian Czar and no Virginian colonies had it not been for the great importance of pepper.

Only gold itself outshone the spices in glamour. Only the New World, which contained the precious metal, could compete with India in interest. The salt-cellar of state, a castor of pure gold, was kept and is still kept along with the crown jewels. It shows the idea of luxury that inhered in condiments. But where pepper had been a passion, gold was a mania. Men risked, not only their mortal lives, but their hopes of eternity in pursuit of this goal. The greatest of the social crimes — slavery and piracy — grew out of the hectic quest, as did the glorious dream of a new and perfect universe. In all this vast development Elizabeth was deeply implicated. She shared in the crimes and the ideals which had once been Sir Thomas Seymour's.

The gunpowder which he had brought from the continent she manufactured like flour. She forged cannon and issued letters of marque. She sent men out to die on their own responsibility, and when just that happened, she never turned a hair. The King of France hanged in trees the soldiers she had sent to fight for the Huguenots and tacked a scroll above their heads saying that they had volunteered against the will of their Queen. Elizabeth writhed a little when she heard

this, but did not lose her head. The marvel of the times was that there were so many men who were ready to accept these desperate commissions, and also that there was a Queen with ironclad nerves to issue them. The explanation of both facts is that the stakes were so high. "Forty-six horses, laden with gold and silver for the Treasury of the Queen, have arrived here this week," wrote the Fugger agent in London; "each horse carrying two hundred and twenty pounds in weight." Henry the Seventh never saw so much gold in all his life. He was a little miser, while Elizabeth was a bandit. In those days a pirate was not a painted picture. He literally sailed the seas, wore ear-rings, and scuttled ships, making the captain walk the plank. Sea-salt was in the English blood. Dane and Anglo-Saxon had left it there. When things grew too uncomfortable on land, it was easy to take refuge on the sea. Boats were no more venturesome than horses to the young men of Cornwall and Devonshire. They had sailed the Channel from boyhood as had Tristram and Seymour and Henry the Seventh in his youth. When Elizabeth's guerrilla troops invaded France, they advanced by sailing up the Seine. And as there was, for these amphibians, such a thin line between land and sea, there was another just as thin between privateers and pirates.

Since the days of Captain Thomessin, the number of Channel pirates had been greatly augmented. The national disgrace which Seymour had expiated had

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Since the days of Captain Thomessin, the number of Channel pirates had been greatly augmented. The national disgrace which Seymour had expiated had

not died out. Protestant exiles under Mary had fled only partly to the continent; many had stopped midway, leading an outlawed existence among the Channel islands and in the Irish creeks. To a large extent the Protestants and the pirates were affiliated. When Elizabeth came to the throne, and the continental exiles returned, the Channel refugees likewise emerged into the open waters and became a semi-official navy.

Elizabeth, who had never left the shores of England, had a great fondness for these dubious men who sailed upon the sea. Their name was legion. In the pages of Froude's history they are listed, as it were, in a roll of honour. The most impeccable English families gave younger sons to swell the list. They laid the foundations of the English Navy and of the colonies overseas. The Reformation had broken down barriers other than religious in their minds. It had opened up vistas in any and all directions. They were a daring race of men, and the Queen, with all her leaning toward slow action, was one with them. She took chances as they took them. It was her gambling instinct rather than her courage that guided her but it sufficed for that age.

II

A gentleman of equally dubious character, though in a somewhat different sphere, was Dr. John Dee, the astrologer. The historians of his country are a little ashamed of Dee, who was nevertheless a scholar of no

mean pretensions. He studied at Cambridge and was introduced at court by the same influence as William Cecil, who became the great Lord Burghley, while Dee remained always Doctor Dee. Like Cecil, he too bowed the knee to the Catholic oppression and survived Mary's reign to serve her sister's. He cast both of their horoscopes on their accession and fixed the auspicious day for their coronations. A comparatively unimportant figure, Dee won his place in history by writing his own memoirs with such vividness that posterity could not forget him. His eight children and their mother, his "painful Jane," as he called her, were incidentally preserved in the national archives.

Dee had many qualities that appealed to Elizabeth. A Welshman and good-looking, he was also devoted to her service. He would not marry without her permission, and when he lost his mother, a visit from Her Majesty went far towards consoling him. Elizabeth treated him accordingly. Having promised him a certain sum for the celebration of Christmas, she encountered him by chance before the present was delivered. "I thank thee, Dee," she said, in response to his salute. "There was never promise made but it was broken or kept." But later she sent the present, which was a hundred angels and surely a welcome stipend to Dee's painful Jane.

In return for Elizabeth's favours the astrologer rendered various services. He was extremely versatile. He had begun his career by writing school-books for

little Prince Edward. In time he had progressed from this to the transmutation of base metals into gold. His ideas on the subject were submitted to Elizabeth on paper, but nothing came of them. Her Majesty returned his plans with thanks. She had better results from her pirates.

Dee's interest in angels was an obsession, which, considering his eight children and his penniless condition, is not to be wondered at. An angel was ten shillings. But it was rarely on the material plane that Dee encountered these visitants. Nor were his heavenly visions at all like Fra Angelico's. The angels that appeared to him were dressed like courtiers, the flesh-and-blood ladies and gentlemen who rode by his gate or passed up the Thames on barges at the foot of his garden. For Dee had chosen his residence as near to Hampton Court as possible, right under the Queen's nose.

The most striking coincidence of all was that one of his heavenly visitors resembled Elizabeth, and another her brother Edward. Dee named the former Madini, and the latter Nalvage. "His hair hangeth down a quarter of a length of the cap, somewhat curling, yellow," said Dee, describing Nalvage, which is somewhat like the aspect under which Holbein painted him. Madini was a "wench in white," as Elizabeth had also been when she was a Princess and the astrologer first came to court. But Madini gradually grew to womanhood, and, as an adult angel, she developed

a voice like Elizabeth's. Whether she indulged in wicked taunts like her royal counterpart does not appear, but let us hope that the loud voice often spoke graciously to the loyal Dee.

One of the functions of Dee's angels was to give him information, chiefly geographical, about America. They called it "Atlantis," and, judging from the maps of that period, their information was far from accurate. But Dee dutifully set it all down on parchment and then presented it to the Queen. He also prepared, with the same helpful collaboration, a document to prove her title to these lands. Two large rolls were required to contain his findings, and the Queen saved herself time and energy by asking her treasurer to look over them. But she herself rode down on a windy day in March to thank the astrologer for his efforts. "Graciously calling me to her . . ." says the gratified star-gazer, "[she] told me that the Lord Treasurer had greatly commended my doings for her title . . . which title in two rolls he had brought home before, and delivered to Mr. Hudsen for me." Sir Thomas Seymour's wildest dreams had never gone as far as this. No astrologer had ever set down for him on parchment, no matter how theoretical, details to justify his claims or had ever drawn for him a map of his possessions. For him the lost Atlantis remained a bright land of dreams and it was left to Queen Elizabeth to realize the fact. Men like Seymour and John Dee were as prophets and forerunners to one of her

strong realism. Her coarse-grained temperament had great need of them.

In spite of his industry and his learning, Dr. Dee never prospered. His angels remained in the spirit world, and even their visionary presence at last failed him. He was often on the ragged edge of poverty, and only his friends at court, with whom his wife kept up a constant intercourse, saved his family from extreme poverty. He lived to a ripe old age, and when he and the Queen were both nearing the end of their days, she made him Warden of Manchester College. Someone at court had reminded her that the Dees were again in need of help and she had found this post for him. The aged scholar accepted her gift thankfully, as usual, and borrowed money to install himself in his new position. The art of changing metals into gold still eluded him.

III

To Sir John Hawkins, Elizabeth's great contemporary, America was no mythical Atlantis. It was a new land beyond the sea to which his father had once sailed. He knew that it was inhabited by Spanish colonists and Indian natives, and that the natives would not, or rather could not, be enslaved. He knew that there were rich mines and vast plantations and that they were held by owners who had seized them and paid nothing for their title. He knew that these possessions would only yield their treasure at a great expense

of labour and that the American Indians could not be expected to supply the need. On this basis of fact his imagination took a great forward leap, but not into the infinite, as did that of Dr. Dee. His was the practical idea of taking Negroes to America from Africa in his empty ships, which were to be filled on his return with whatever cargo his voyage had supplied him. To the booty of the high seas was added the profits on his original black merchandise which he had captured "by the sword and other means." It seems that it was only necessary to shoot off some of Elizabeth's great cannons for the black men to fall down in helpless terror and be dragged away.

Hawkins's first vessels were about twice as large as a modern aeroplane and into the small holds of these ships he crowded a hundred Negroes. With his harvest of force and terror he then sailed across the wide Atlantic and landed at San Domingo and other Spanish ports. If the creatures thus brought over survived the hands of Sir John Hawkins, it is not surprising that they subsequently survived the mines and the plantations. His business prospered, and when Sir John made his second trip, Queen Elizabeth took shares in it. She contributed a ship called the *Jesus,* armed with guns and stocked with gunpowder, the noise of which alone was enough to capture the Africans. With this improved equipment Hawkins did better than ever and returned to Cornwall in safety with enormous profits. "I arrived in port . . . with your Majesty's

ship, the *Jesus,* in good safety — thanks be to God, . . ." he reported piously. Whatever money she gained this way was at least without conditions, while Parliament still hampered their appropriations with requests for her to marry or appoint a successor. John Hawkins was a man after her own heart. He went forth on his own responsibility and asked for nothing better. Her parting instructions to him were without offence. "Your Majesty's commandment at my departing from your Grace at Enfield," he wrote, "I have accomplished . . . for I have always been a help to all Spaniards and Portugals that have come in my way."

Elizabeth's association with Hawkins was but a step towards her connexion, so much more incriminating, with Francis Drake. Like Hawkins, Drake was a Protestant, one of the coming men. His father had been a chaplain in the navy in the days of Admiral Seymour, and Drake himself had sailed the Channel at that time and during the reign of Mary. At the age of twenty-one he fell heir to a small ship, and as Hawkins was then preparing with the Queen's aid for a second adventure, Drake volunteered his vessel and his services.

This expedition was a failure. Hawkins lost his men, Elizabeth her vessels, and Drake his inheritance. For all of the partners in the enterprise it was quite a setback. Hawkins was kept busy for several years trying to undo the results of the misfortune. Either with or without the Queen's aid, but more probably with

Walsingham's, he rescued his men from Spanish prisons. It was done chiefly by trickery and deception, at which Hawkins was extremely adept. The Spaniards of those days must have been very gullible, as people long accustomed to meet success are likely to be, or else England was breeding a sharp-witted race of men. The Spanish government was led to believe, among other things, that Hawkins was a traitor to his own country; yet Philip of Spain had had the advantage of a year's residence in England and thought that he knew Englishmen.

Young Francis Drake had, as it were, been plucked on his first voyage and his dominant idea thereafter was revenge. He lived, as he said, to "make himself whole with the Spaniards." With the Queen's aid he collected enough ships to sail to the West Indies, where he devastated several towns. Then, having tasted his revenge, he lay in wait for the harvest of gold and silver which Hawkins's Negroes had meanwhile gathered for him. He had the proverbial beginner's luck. The Spanish cargo ran into his hands by land and sea and Drake was soon headed for England with a store of the precious metal. There was once an English pirate who paused on his way to dally at a certain island, and while he lingered in the arms of a beautiful lady, the Spanish came and stripped him clean. But Drake was no Tannhäuser. He sailed straightway home to England and arrived without mishap, piously thanking Providence.

Elizabeth was elated. Although she did not like odd creatures, like dwarfs and Negroes, in her environment, she graciously accepted the West Indian slave that Drake presented to her as a souvenir and exhibited him to her courtiers. She also accepted the gold bullion he had ravished from King Philip, and, while she did not exhibit it, the whole world knew that she had it. Francis Drake could no longer hide his light under a bushel, even had he cared to, and Elizabeth had gone too far to disown him now. Among her councillors were God-fearing men and strong Puritans, like Francis Drake himself, who backed her up in the robbery. After all, they said, Spain did not own the gold any more than the rest of the world. While the Queen dreaded war worse than the plague, she was not framed by temperament to resist temptation of this kind. She had bought shares in Francis Drake's adventure before he left England, for his exploits had already arrived at this businesslike stage. Nevertheless at every step she shuddered at the thought of a Spanish invasion, while Walsingham kept assuring her "they would not come this year." One day she heard a chance shot boom out on the Thames and, thinking he had deceived her, threw her slipper at Walsingham's face. But no one could forget a danger, once it was past and over, sooner than Elizabeth, and Drake was only curtailed for a time and then let loose again.

In December 1577 he left England with the Queen's blessing on his memorable voyage round the world.

It is a question whether Elizabeth knew where he was going or whether Drake himself knew. His official orders were to cruise about in the West Indian waters and rescue the Queen's subjects who were in Spanish prisons. This was in itself no small feat and Hawkins, who had excelled in it, was already a national hero. But Francis Drake had other plans for earning his laurels. With five ships and a hundred and fifty men he sailed round the world. Step by step, like the English Queen with her tentative policies, he pressed on to his unseen and triumphant end. Southward he persevered in the wake of Magellan until he emerged upon the broad bosom of the Pacific. No Englishman had as yet gone this far, not even the great Hawkins, and Drake was, for the time being, completely satisfied. He was ready to turn homeward if he could find a passage back to the Atlantic through the unknown continent. To turn backward in his tracks was impossible, for this was to run straight into the arms of the waiting Spaniards. So he continued northward along the Pacific coast — past the shores of Peru, Panama, and Mexico, on into the further reaches of what is now known as California, Oregon, and Washington. He passed the mouth of the Columbia River before he finally gave up. The adjacent land he called New Albion and claimed for Elizabeth. But no colonists came after him and the claim was forgotten.

Still for Francis Drake there was no turning back. He sat at his lonely meals in a red cap like a sultan,

with a sentinel always at his door, and a band of musicians to divert him. Nothing shook his regal state, though death and the ocean bottom might be waiting at the next turn. Treachery and cowardice were unforgivable, as men who sailed with Francis Drake learned to their cost. Judge, jury, and executioner in one, he cut off his mate's head with his own hands, having first duly, and without assistance, court-martialed him, and steered his ship henceforth alone. The Protestant parson whom he had brought along to convert Catholics and savages escaped a similar bloody fate partly because Drake did not think him worthy. During a dangerous passage in the Indian Ocean, the poor divine, whose name was Fletcher, succumbed to an attack of panic. Drake solemnly tried and excommunicated him, as if he were a pope. Elizabeth might be the ruler of England, but Drake was the sole head of Church and State on the Pacific Ocean and woe to any hapless wight who fell afoul of his authority. And practically no one did. His men were well paid and well treated when they reached home, while the Queen was given the lion's share of the booty. Drake was not avaricious ; he took what was allotted him and was therewith content. What use had such a man for money?

The Spanish government shouted to all the winds that they had been despoiled of seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The English Queen and Drake investigated. " In the Matter General," reported the

official whom she assigned to the task, "I see nothing to charge Mr. Drake further than he is inclined to charge himself. . . . His whole course of his voyage hath showed him to be of great valour, but my hap has been to see some particularities, and namely in this discharge of his company, as doth assure me he is a man of great government, and that by the rules of God and his Book." So Elizabeth gave Drake a knighthood and more money, Sir Christopher Hatton handed down a legal opinion to justify her course, and the Spanish King was left to gnash his teeth and build more galleons.

There was no longer any pretence of good feeling between Philip and Elizabeth. The Spanish leviathan had been speared and his blood foamed out upon the churning waves. Slowly he turned himself about and prepared to take a prodigious revenge. After all, it was the imperial Habsburgs who had sent Columbus out, and not the upstart Tudors. Priding himself on this exploit, Philip did not realize that he had learned nothing since Columbus's day. A century had passed since then and he was still building the same type of ships as the caravel. The great mountainous vessels went on rising in the bay of Cadiz until Drake slipped down from the Channel one day and burnt ten thousand tons of them. This time he allowed himself a joke. "We have singed the beard of the King of Spain," he said. Philip bore the taunt phlegmatically and patiently rebuilt his galleons.

IV

If Elizabeth kept Leicester's portrait in her cabinet, she also kept Philip's portrait hanging in her bedroom. Even when a war with Spain was impending, she did not remove the painting. He had once seriously asked her hand in marriage, and for this she was incorrigibly grateful. Besides, he was tall and handsome, with the eyes which she liked to look in best — those of a habitual day-dreamer. His ceremonious manners were the cloak of his shy disposition. His haughtiness concealed his inward loneliness, and his monumental industry was an escape from actual work.

The accepted simile for Philip is that of a spider. The Escorial was his web, in the midst of which he sat and spun his far-reaching plans. Endless dispatches ran out from the spider's web, voluminous reports ran back. Memoranda, plans, directions, promises to pay, flowed incessantly from his hand. By these means he governed his scattered kingdom, which extended from remote Peru to Italy, without giving up his solitude. His council assembled without his presence and took action on his notes. Withal he insisted on supervising every detail of the government — domestic, colonial, and foreign — and only failed at his stupendous task because he was no more than human. But he was such a grandiose performer that his failure was hardly realized.

Such a man could clearly not invent nor construct

anything. Having inherited from his father a definite foreign policy he could never depart from it. A passionate attachment to his birthplace made him afraid of leaving it. He went into bankruptcy repeatedly, but never learned how to avoid the same catastrophe. After twenty years of preparation he went to war with England in the same form and manner in which he had prepared to go when the idea first occurred to him. Everybody disliked him, except Elizabeth and a few Castilians. What Philip felt for her would be difficult to ascertain, but he must have remembered sometimes his once well-meant proposal. It is hard to believe that he ever hated her. He probably shared her own wish, as it once frantically escaped her: "Would to God we could each have our own, and be at peace!"

Philip's preparations for warfare were a compliment to England. His ships and men were the supreme expression of his power and strength. His galleons were castles and his men were armoured knights. His plan was a revival of the crusades, blue blood and chivalry going out to fight the neo-pagan world, Rome conquering the barbarians, Spain driving out the infidels. In keeping with the grandeur of Philip's accoutrements, hundreds of camp-followers went on board, as they would have done in the Middle Ages. But at the last moment the Duke of Medina, though himself a court gallant, ordered all the prostitutes on land. The tears of the frivolous "were comforted with the report that there were comely wenches in

England," the Pope's vicar gave his blessing, and the Armada sailed.

Twenty thousand of the best soldiers in Europe were stowed away in the Spanish fleet, and seventeen thousand more were waiting in Holland to join them. The Duke of Parma was ready there with his transports as soon as Medina should come in sight. It was the month of May, and a hundred and fifty vessels, having weighed anchor and set sail, went tacking northward in the wind.

All this had cost the King of Spain, or rather, the Fugger family, which paid most of the bills, a pretty penny. The Fuggers amassed a fortune and the Habsburgs ran through it. Philip and his ancestors borrowed ten million dollars from these Midas-peasants, which they never repaid. Some of the notes were burned by the quixotic Fuggers, and some of them survived, as worthless paper, until Philip's last bankruptcy.

The Pope was not so trusting. He loaned Philip a million, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, but withheld half of the sum until the Spaniards should at least have set foot in England and captured at least one important harbour. "She is a valiant woman," Sixtus said of Elizabeth. Nevertheless he prepared a bull which excommunicated her, declaring her to be "dispossessed of her Kingdom, her lands, and her subjects, being long since a condemned heretic." All her titles and honours were thereby transferred by His Holiness to the King of Spain, who was



QUEEN ELIZABETH. From the painting by Marcus Gheeraedts in the National Portrait Gallery

"to wage war upon the Queen and to endeavour to bring her lands and her people under his sway." Proclaimed in the Vatican and even posted up in London, the edict held no terrors for the English Queen. It was thirty years since a papal threat could have frightened Elizabeth. That bogey had been forever laid for her and all English sovereigns.

But shot and shell were another matter. Once when the Spanish Ambassador had lost his temper and threatened her, saying: "Your Majesty will not hear words, so we must come to the cannon," she had been stricken, as it were, by an ominous calm and told the rash man quietly that she would throw him in a dungeon if he talked to her like that. The Spaniard had quickly recovered himself and thrown off hastily that "the Queen, being a lady also, might well throw him to the lions." But the rash southerner had long since departed and there was no victim to throw to the lions when the Armada actually came in sight. "*Je ne veux point la guerre,*" Elizabeth had roared at her council for the last thirty years. Yet here it was now, at her very door, and nothing in the world could stop it. In the face of real and present danger Elizabeth suddenly turned warrior.

On the 19th of July 1588 the Armada, in a stately half-moon, sailed into the English Channel. Its approach was ceremonious, but not rapid. By a lightning chain of beach fires, the news sped up to London. There was a hurrying and skurrying of land troops

to headquarters — a mobilization which must have made quite a national stir, although the unexpected course of the succeeding events has thrown the land soldiers into a deep shadow. The minute men of England made no history on that day. Their only vivid memory is their rally around Elizabeth at Tilbury. Wearing a metal corselet and preceded by a horseman bearing her metal helmet, Elizabeth rode among her troops and reviewed them like a general. On one side of her, encased in heavy armour, rode the Earl of Leicester, and on the other, similarly encased, rode his stepson Robert, the young Earl of Essex.

This muster, be it noted, was not merely a parade, for England expected the Spaniards to land at Tilbury. Elizabeth was virtually at the front and she remained there, sleeping close behind the lines, until all danger of invasion was over. A vast upwelling of national devotion encompassed her about. What Catholic young Englishman could resist the flood of national feeling at this time? The Queen was like a may-pole round which the whole country wound with mad enthusiasm. A tailor went crazy from sheer excitement and died for love of her.

Whether Elizabeth made the famous speech ascribed to her by tradition is unfortunately doubtful. But she could so easily have made it that the words are well worth quoting: "I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king — and of a King of England too,

and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm." The Queen must have said as much or something of the kind more than once in her lifetime, and, if they came as an afterthought to the propaganda office, they are nevertheless true to the spirit of Elizabeth. Unfortunately, not everything which came from the same source was equally trustworthy. A daily bulletin — the forerunner of the modern newspaper — and the chaplain's daily sermon were utilized by the statesmen for the maintenance of morale. Walsingham and Burghley were both experts in publicity.

Meanwhile the real battle had already been fought in the English Channel. It was an unheard-of encounter, an action without a precedent. The Armada was not a navy; it was a transport fleet carrying soldiers to fight in England. The Spanish warriors expected to board the English vessels and fight on deck; afterwards to land and give battle on shore. They had no idea of English vessels, English strategy, Englishmen. They had repeatedly encountered English ships and officers in the past fifteen years, yet with that strange dunder-headedness which pride only can give, they were placidly unaware of what they had to meet. Perhaps Drake and Hawkins did not know their own tactics in advance, but they were past-masters of opportunity, inspired realists. Born and bred on the English Channel, they knew its every aspect and

every whim and how to take advantage of its traits. Their little ships could sail twice as fast as the great Spanish galleons and their guns could fire four shots to the Spaniards' one. Every English captain was a commander-in-chief if he chose to be one, although Lord Admiral Charles Howard was the great figure-head. With one accord the English vessels closed in behind the Spanish transports and, aided by the wind, literally chased them forward. It was the well-known tactics of the pirates.

Up the Channel they pursued the flying enemy, shooting through the towering hulks until the blood ran out in streams from the bullet-holes they made. Sailing beneath the range of the lofty Spanish guns, the small English vessels ventured close up to their prey. Now and then they sank a ship — and let it sink while they sailed on. Only Lord Admiral Howard stopped to take a vessel prisoner, but the others pressed forward, never once relaxing the implacable pursuit. The Spanish fleet, demoralized, had only one thought, and that was to escape these fiendish pursuers. For a moment they thought they had done so when they put into the Calais harbour. But presently eight blazing fireships — some allege it was Elizabeth's suggestion, but more probably it was Francis Drake's — bore down upon them and drove them out again. They had no choice now but to stagger on. There was a terrifying moment as they cleared the shores of England and headed for Holland. But the towering hulks could not

hold their course against the strong southerly gale that had sprung up. Even Drake admitted that he was relieved by this breeze. "Nothing ever pleased me better than to see the enemy fly with a southerly wind to the northwards," he said in his report.

The English vessels followed until their food and ammunition gave out. The Queen has always been blamed for her parsimony at this point and probably deserves the blame. But no one had anticipated a naval battle of this kind and no one was prepared for it. Drake and Howard sent vain calls for the powder, shot, and provisions which were perhaps lying useless at Tilbury. Finally the English fleet warped into harbor, leaving the Armada still flying northward. There was in fact no longer any need to continue the pursuit. A great storm had arisen and the south wind had become a tearing, racing hurricane whose dread anger far outran the wrath of the Englishmen. The superstitious Spaniards ceased to struggle against their fate. They were half dead in spirit before they perished by shipwreck on the shores of Scotland and Ireland. In hundreds and thousands their naked bodies, robbed by the barbarous natives of the last stitch of clothing, lay, like white enormous larvæ, thick along the beach. Only one third of the vessels and one-half of the men ever reached Spain. The flower of Spanish chivalry had perished never to revive again.

V

Still rocking with the surprise of a naval battle, London hung its streets with blue cloth in honour of the sea. The Queen went in state to Saint Paul's to offer thanks and ate roast goose to celebrate the victory. She was exhilarated. The dreaded Armada had come and gone, and, but for the wretched sailors who were dying in the hospitals, England was hardly touched. The Queen bestowed a pension on Lord Charles Howard and made young Essex, who had ridden by her side at Tilbury, a Knight of the Garter. Her joyous rebound was so great that she planned to make Leicester Lord Lieutenant of England and Ireland — the same office which she had once before designed for him. It was a position suited for a royal consort, and now, as then, the Council would not allow it. The document was made out, all but the signature, when the process was suddenly arrested and the appointment fell through. Perhaps the Queen herself waxed cold, as she often did if given a little time. It was a pity that her old friend was thus twice humiliated in the same way.

For Leicester was no longer the same old heart of oak. Like Henry the Eighth, he had grown corpulent and unhealthy in his middle years. His face was red and bloated and his suits of armour, which can be seen today in the Tower, are almost as large as Henry's own. But, despite his loss of beauty, Elizabeth still

loved him. His brief defection to her cousin Lettice and her flirtation with Alençon had been outlived and forgotten. They shared the great joy of victory after the Armada together as they had shared the joy of the coronation. It was their second honeymoon, brief, but radiant and effulgent. On their next common natal day, they would both be fifty-five.

But Leicester was not to live to see it. He was one of the casualties of the war, as his nephew Philip Sidney had been a casualty of the Dutch campaign. The aftermath of sickness overtook Leicester and brought him to his end. He died at Cornbury while on a journey, not at home and in the care of his wife. Only six days previously, he had written to Elizabeth. "I most humbly beseech your Majesty," he said, "to pardon your poore old servant to be thus bold in sending to know how my gracious Lady doth and what ease of her late pains she finds, being the chiefest thing in this world I do pray for, for her to have good health and long life. For my own poor case, I continue still your medicine and find it amend much better than with any other thing that hath been given me. Thus hoping to find perfect cure at the bath with the continuance of my wonted prayer for your Majesty's most happy preservation I humbly kiss your foot, from your old lodging at Rycott this Thursday morning, ready to take on my journey. . . ."

Elizabeth put the paper in the drawer with his portrait, and wrote on the outside: "His Last Letter."

She locked her door and refused to see anyone. In this way she spent her fifty-fifth birthday, while the beloved companion who had been born under the same star as herself was being slowly borne to his tomb beside the Avon. The widow's weeds were worn for him by another woman, but Elizabeth would see to it that the Countess of Leicester had no other inheritance. The Earl had died in debt to the State and she exacted payment of his debt to the last farthing. "However gentle the Queen might show herself in other respects," says Camden, the historian, "yet did she very rarely remit what was owing to her treasury." If Leicester's fortune did not belong to her, it belonged at least to England; if she was not his widow, the nation should be.

Chapter XI

ESSEX

I

When Anne Boleyn was married to Henry the Eighth, her more easy-going sister Mary was married to an obscure young Englishman by the name of William Carey. Beyond the fact that he was a complaisant husband and died of the sweating sickness, nothing is known of him. He was nevertheless a progenitor of the brilliant Earl of Essex, although his famous great-



THE EARL OF ESSEX. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery

grandson was prone to forget the Careys. The Mandevilles, the Bourchiers, and the Devereuxes were his better-known ancestors, and three centuries of Norman blood should have been enough, in all truth, to make him take his nobility for granted. But pride of ancestry was one of the strongest traits in Essex's character and one of the chief influences in his destiny. For some strange reason he seems to have thought that his blood was better than the Queen's. As a matter of fact, his mother was Elizabeth's cousin on the Boleyn side, and, if his father's ancestry showed a line of Norman barons, the Queen's went back, through her grandmother, to a line of Norman kings. The pride of the Earl of Essex was purely a matter of attitude, a fixed state of mind. Unlike the great Lord Leicester, who was commonly spoken of as Lord Robert, the younger favourite was always called by his titulary name of "Essex." That he was another Robert almost escaped notice.

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, had a tall, well-built figure, but he was neither particularly handsome nor especially graceful. His picture in the National Portrait Gallery suggests that he may have been stoop-shouldered. His manners were courtly, but self-conscious. Francis Bacon, his friend and mentor, once admonished him thus: "A man may read your formality in your countenance; whereas it [flattering] ought to be done familiarly and with an air of interest." His conduct alternated between violent activity

and extreme lethargy; he either sulked and brooded or flamed with energy. A sensitive, unhappy youth, a romantic and unfulfilled young man — he was of the type immortalized by Hamlet and Goethe's Werther — the predestined hero of a tragedy.

On his frail shoulders fate began early to heap burdens. At the age of nine he inherited his title, without funds to sustain it, and went to Cambridge the following year in clothes which, as his tutor wrote his guardian, were literally threadbare and ragged. Five years later, the same guardian, who happened to be Lord Burghley, rebuked him for extravagance and Essex humbly acknowledged it. But he could not have been sincere, for his debts increased by leaps and bounds until, about nine years later, they amounted to twenty-three thousand pounds. From his earliest school-days he was surrounded by sycophants and pursued by followers; and, after his military career in Holland, he was never without a legion. They groaned whenever they saw him interceding for others — especially unpopular persons like the members of his family. "For my Lord of Essex," said one naïvely, "by importuning the Queen in these unpleasing matters, loses the opportunity he might take to do good unto his ancient friends."

Essex was only seventeen when he arrived at Elizabeth's court. It was not at his own wish that he was thus early brought there. For three years after his graduation — they graduated early in those days —

he had vegetated in the rural district where he had been born. It is said that he hated his stepfather, Leicester, and that Leicester returned his feeling. In any case he preferred solitude to court life at this impressionable age and gave his time to literature. He wrote poetry, prose, and translations and was later reputed to be "one of the most learned noblemen of his time." But Essex was not a great literary genius, nor, as events proved, a great statesman, nor a great general. He was one of those who achieve fame by their personalities. It was this quality which brought him to Elizabeth's court, or, rather, led others to propel him there; it was this quality by which he, or, rather, they, hoped to ensnare the Queen; it was this quality with which, even more than with his good looks, she duly fell in love. Those who officiated at the prostitution of the Earl of Essex are still anonymous. But without doubt his mother had a large part in it.

Essex's mother was Lettice, the daughter of Sir Francis Knollys. She was married three times in her life and lived almost a century. On the death of the Earl of Essex she married the Earl of Leicester, his enemy, and gossips said that Leicester had poisoned her husband. These stories doubtless reached the ears of her nine-year-old son, Robert, whom she furthermore outraged by the gift of a small half-brother. This second son, however, lived to be only five. His death, which was a great grief to the Earl of Leicester, was

the end of any harmony which had ever existed between him and Countess Lettice. From this time on, their bickerings were common property. The Earl resumed his allegiance to the Queen and the Countess consoled herself with her first-born. But in the mean time she was busy establishing her daughters, making and breaking their engagements, until the Queen was on edge with anxiety as to what the matchmaker would do next. At one time she heard a rumour that the Earl of Essex's sister was to be married to the King of Scotland; and, in transports of rage, she denounced the author of the scheme as a she-wolf and a bad woman. The Countess of Leicester drew in her claws, but not for long. She was a managing woman and she never knew where to stop.

Young Essex was suddenly haled from his peaceful retreat and his tender feet were planted upon the slippery path of intrigue and court preferment. Having done this for her offspring, Lettice Knollys thought that the least he could do in return was to be grateful. "Your Lordship is grown," she wrote, "I will not say slothful, but somewhat sparing of your pen, in relieving your absent friends both with news of your welfare, and other accounts there happening, which we cannot but desire to hear of this dangerous time. Wherefore, do not think to excuse yourself by much business, which I know you want not; for I must have you, notwithstanding, bestow a few idle lines on your mother, to whom they are most welcome, and who otherwise

may grow jealous that you love her not so well as she deserves, which blot I know you will take away. And, as she hath made you the chief comfort of her life, so I doubt not of your noble nature, but that you will be careful to maintain it with all child-like kindness. So, sweet Robin, praying the Almighty to bless you with all most honourably happy fortune, I end, remaining your mother infinitely loving you, L. Leicester."

To do justice to Lady Leicester, it must be admitted that the Queen presented an obvious temptation. Tool and victim that he was, the Duke of Alençon had not failed to leave his mark on Elizabeth's character. Henceforth she gave her admiration and her favours to younger men. Even after she and Leicester had been reconciled, she cast wistful glances at his youthful rivals. After all she was — and the phrase is to be taken in a literal and serious sense — an incurable coquette and found novelty and flattery irresistible. An obscure but pushing gallant, Sir Walter Raleigh, supplied her with these dainties and trod a little closely on the heels of the ageing Leicester. Perhaps this was the influence which led the noble Earl to help his wife, with whom he was on such bad terms, and to promote a stepson whom he cordially disliked. And so it came about that, at Tilbury, Leicester rode on one side of the Queen and Essex on the other. Then, when Leicester died soon after the Armada, his mantle logically fell upon Essex. He became Master of the Horse, General

of the Horse, Knight of the Garter, and chief favourite of the Queen.

After a brief, glamourous beginning, there was never any peace between him and the Queen. Elizabeth tyrannized over Essex and he imposed upon her. On the one hand she spoiled him, and on the other she expected him to play the man. His only means of self-defence were open rebellion or downright illness. He ran away from her but only to return again; he took to his bed, but only to recover when the Queen came to visit him. He was, in a word, a neurotic character and the complex situation in which he found himself strained to the breaking point every tenuous filament of his nervous system. His temperament was one which needed to be shielded, instead of which he was thrown, neck and crop, with the down still soft upon his face, into the storm of battle. "My Lord of Essex kept his bed," says one observer, "the most part of all yesterday. . . . Full fourteen days his Lordship kept in; Her Majesty, as I heard, resolved to break him of his will and to pull down his great heart, who . . . says he holds it from the mother's side."

The bright side of the relation was a gracious companionship. The basis was intellectual. Between them there existed a communion of spirit that made them of one age, a plane of mental intercourse on which they met as equals. There had never been anything of the kind between the Queen and Leicester, for Leicester was not brilliant; but Essex was the kind of man her

brother Edward might have been — a scholar and a poet. His vast respect for learning, for literature, for quality, was equal to her own. They strove like school-children for marks of excellence. On the famous occasion when Elizabeth, as Queen, denounced the Polish Ambassador in extemporaneous Latin, her first thought afterwards was a regret that Essex was not there to hear it. They competed likewise in conversation, turned phrases, coined epigrams and riddles, talked — in the intervals of playing cards — all night. It was the pageantry of Kenilworth repeated in the form of diction, eloquence, bright talk. Their words were tinged with passion, their similes struck fire, their minds cohabited. On this plane of intercourse at least their ages were equal, though he was twenty-five and she was sixty.

A part of Essex's precocity was his seriousness. He took the troubles of his protégés too much to heart and, as his sense of responsibility was far beyond his years, so often was his wisdom and his insight. The mixture of condescension and shrewd judgment which occurs in a letter to a scapegrace cousin belies his inexperience. "After your Lordship," he began, "had rashly almost entangled yourself in bonds that were not worthy to hold you, it pleased God not only to deliver you from that snare but direct you to match yourself . . . with a Lady both of great honour and friends. . . . Since which . . . some instruments do labour to set variance between you, to which to my grief, I hear,

your Lordship gives too much ear, for as peace at home in a man's own house and with her that is another himself, is the greatest blessing that a man may have in this world, because without it there can be no peace of mind, so the contrary is the greatest cross. I hear that those unquiet spirits are not satisfied with disagreements, but so labour a separation, of which I will be bold to say thus much: that as it will be dishonourable for your Lordship to incline to any such humour . . . so it will be exceeding disadvantage to you to execute your purpose. For as her friends are far greater than yours, so her cause will make her more friends when, without cause, you make her suffer."

It was the Queen's prerogative to interfere in marital affairs and she liked especially to exercise it. Yet Essex added the following postscript to his letter: "If I had not by chance heard of this, my Lady of Warwick had informed the Queen of it, which course I have stayed till I hear again from your Lordship. . . ." Elizabeth's court of domestic relationships was her particular hobby, yet already the Earl of Essex was tampering with her privilege. If she had heard of his interference — as probably she never did — she would have been as irate as when he ran away to France against her direct orders. "The Earl of Essex would have it thought that he rules my kingdom," she said to the French Ambassador, "but nothing is more untrue, and I will make him the most pitiful fellow in my realm." But she did not mean it. She loved him and

was secretly proud of the impetuous temperament which led him to disobey her and rush headlong into battle.

II

The adolescence of the Earl of Essex came out in the diversity of his aspirations. He aspired, not only to the Queen's, but to everybody's laurels. Having stepped into Sir Philip Sidney's shoes and inherited Leicester's mantle, he looked around him and discovered there were still more worlds to conquer. Sir Francis Walsingham, worn out at last, died in 1590 and Essex sought the vacant post of Elizabeth's Secretary. But Lord Burghley drew the line at that and Essex was obliged to see the post go to Robert Cecil, Lord Burghley's hunch-backed son, whom he already hated. It was his first set-back. He had driven Sir Walter Raleigh and his plush coat far off to the Irish morasses, in those days as remote as the Antipodes. But Raleigh was merely the relative — and a distant one at that — of Dame Katherine Ashley, who was now growing old and presumably more easy-going than she had been formerly; whereas Robert Cecil was the son of Mildred Cooke, one of those scheming daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, the Puritan, who wove like hidden Parcæ the fate of the British Empire. He was not born to suffer defeat, no matter how severe, as final. With Essex and Cecil, it was a case of the hare and the

tortoise. The hare thought many times that he had won, only to see the slow-moving tortoise plodding onward before him. To Walsingham's place, Secretary of State, Cecil added, one after another, posts which Essex coveted for himself or for his friends, while looking forward all the while to the perquisites of Lord Burghley. Essex indeed did not contend for these logical privileges, but on all other issues he offered hot-headed battle. Around the two antagonists the courtiers, the statesmen, the ladies, the servants, eagerly arrayed themselves. Public opinion, a faint influence just beginning to register, favoured the Earl of Essex.

Of those older partisans, who had known the discipline of affliction and suffering, only the Queen and Lord Burghley remained and Lord Burghley was nearing his grave. What must have been Elizabeth's thoughts as she sat by his sick-bed and fed the old man from a spoon? The last of her contemporaries was about to leave her alone and solitary among a crowd of madcaps, as Sir John Harington called them. The worst of the danger was that the Queen herself still carried a youthful and susceptible heart in her withered bosom and was herself at times as much of a madcap as the rest of them. "As long as the dancing lasted," says a German visitor at the English court, "she summoned young and old and spoke continuously. . . . She chatted and jested most amiably with them, and pointing with her finger at the face of one Master or Captain Rall told him there was smut on

it. She also offered to wipe it off with her handkerchief. . . ." But Captain Raleigh, it appears, was more independent than Lord Leicester in a similar situation and made shift to wipe his own face with his own handkerchief. Impulsive young men fought duels about her, and sexual jealousy was mingled in the bitter rivalry of politics. In her younger days Elizabeth had been able to control as well as stimulate these conflicts, but this was no longer true of her. She was not able to subdue the dangerous fires she started. The woman's hunger within herself was still unsatisfied and rampant, while her power to control it was already waning. The court was getting beyond her. The young men, playing *primero* late at night in the Queen's antechamber, became boisterous and noisy; and when her esquire of the body ordered them to be quiet, they fell into a brawl. The Earl of Southampton, Essex's friend, lost a handful of his curls, and the Earl of Essex, his patron, was consequently outraged. The affair came to the Queen's ears, and she upheld her esquire of the body. But there were too many occasions when she had to interfere. Her gatemen and door-keepers were not able as of old to handle the courtiers. It was a slight symptom, but it showed how completely things had altered.

A party formed around Essex. The wits of the court all belonged to it. The dainty Earl of Southampton; Henry Cuffe, the scholar; Sir John Harington of the epigrams; and the crown of them all, Sir Francis

Bacon, rallied to the favourite. A horde of followers within the court and in the city gave him a false self-confidence. In the end it was his friends rather than his enemies who completely destroyed him. "Methinks one honest man or other," says Naunton in his *Fragmenta,* "which had but the brushing of his clothes, might have whispered in his ear: 'My Lord, look to it, this multitude that follows you will either devour you or undo you; do not strive to over-rule all, for it will cost hot water . . . and if needs your genius must have it so, let the court and the Queen's presence be your station. . . ." But there was not one such honest man among them, certainly not the brilliant Bacon nor the gifted Secretary, Cuffe, his two closest friends and most intimate advisers. They were both too fanciful for such prosaic counsel.

Among all the worshippers of fantasy and intellect, one young man stands out as more sober than the rest. His name was Sir Charles Blount and he was a rather slow, tentative young man, who blushed easily and obeyed the Queen. But when he fought a duel with Essex, he wounded him. That the two young hot-bloods subsequently became friends has been attributed to Elizabeth, who peremptorily reconciled them. But the wholesome memory of a wound in the thigh doubtless helped Lord Essex to keep his side of the bargain.

III

The war dragged on between Elizabeth and Philip, as though the Armada had never been and the age had never changed. It was no longer an era of romance and chivalry, but few living could see that. Young men were intoxicated by the legend of Drake and Hawkins and insisted on repeating their exploits, while Philip the unchangeable went on continually repeating himself. "I sent my ships against men, not against billows," he said, and kept on building and dispatching armadas to England. Though none of them arrived, the threat was maddening to one of Elizabeth's temperament. Was she who hated war beyond all things never again to know peace? Englishmen, armed to the teeth, were inherently belligerent. If she did not send them against Philip, they turned against each other. Despairingly she sent out costly expeditions, hoping against hope that each would be the last.

Almost desperate for a decision, she allowed Essex to go to Cadiz. It was in 1596, nine years after Drake had made his memorable attack, and Essex yearned to wear the same historical laurels. With him went Lord Admiral Sir Charles Howard, in command of the fleet, while Essex was leader of the land forces. There followed a spectacular engagement in which Howard burned part of the Spanish ships, but allowed the rest to escape and Essex captured Cadiz, but brought home only a bell and a library. The English regarded this

as victory and huzzaed for the Earl of Essex, but the Queen was more deliberate. Her encomiums were cooler, especially for Essex, and he felt misunderstood. He was already involved in a bitter qurarel with Howard, and the Queen failed, at least actively, to take his part. For the first time a slight rift appeared and lingered between them. Essex disappeared from court and soothed his sorrow with poetry. The "Poor Labouring Bee," written about this time, expressed his melancholy and disillusionment. The following are the first three stanzas:

It was a time when silly bees could speak,
And (in that time) I was a silly bee,
Who fed on time, until my heart did break.
Yet never found the time to favour me,
Of all the swarm, I only could not thrive,
Yet brought I wax and honey to the hive.

Thus when I buzzed, when time no sap would give,
Why is this blessed time to me so dry,
Since (in this time) the lazy drone doth live,
The wasp, the worm, the gnat, the butterfly.
Mated with grief, I kneeled on my knees,
And thus complained to the King of Bees.

God grant (my Lady) thy time may never end,
And yet vouchsafe to hear my plaint of time,
While every fruitless fly hath found a friend,
I am cast down, yet Attomies do climb.

The King replied, but thou poor peevish bee
Art born to serve the time, the time not thee.

Roused from his melancholy, the poet essayed another voyage, this time to the Azores. It was a piratical adventure with Spanish treasure ships as the objective. But while Essex was quarrelling with his rear admiral, the treasure-ships sailed past, and he came home empty-handed. It was not like Drake, who had mingled a few failures with Herculean successes; nor even like Leicester, who, while he had failed in Holland, had at least built Kenilworth. Though a woman, Elizabeth was still a ruler and she saw that her chief favourite was doing her no credit. He captured naught and he built nothing. He was going around in circles, unable to strike out firmly in any definite direction. The Queen braced herself for an act of discipline and made Lord Howard, his colleague, Count of Nottingham, without mentioning Essex. But she was unable to maintain this Spartan spirit. The woman in her had surrendered too much to Essex and she could not see her beloved suffer.

"I cannot feed on fennel, like some flies,"

Essex had written,

"Nor fly to every flower to gather gain.
My appetite waits on my Prince's eyes,
Fed with content, and always pleased with pain."

Elizabeth gave in at last and made him Earl Marshal of England. It was an empty title, though a grand one, long dissociated from any use or service and refurbished for his benefit.

IV

It was not strictly true that the Earl of Essex did not fly to every flower. His relations with women were somewhat ambiguous. He was, in status, a married man, but his wife " lived very retired in her mother's house " and the Queen ignored her existence. Essex in time came to ignore it too and the submissive Lady Frances faded gradually from his view.

There were other young women at court, whom Elizabeth had not banished. The fair Mistress Brydges, though devoid of a Christian name, survives in history, merely because Essex dallied with her. The flouting Lady Mary Howard survives chiefly for the same reason. Essex, who was tired of feigning illnesses that frequently became all too real, varied his tactics by flirtations with these ladies. It made the Queen frantic. She boxed the fair Brydges's ears and uttered hot-tempered threats against Lady Mary. " I have made her my servant," she said angrily, " and she will now make herself my mistress; but, in good faith, William, she shall not, and so tell her." The factotum thus addressed hastened to pass the message on to Sir John Harington. " It might not be amiss to talk to this poor young lady," he said sympathetically. The friends of

Essex were gradually cohering and leaving out the Queen.

There was one rival, however, whom Elizabeth could not drive from the field. That was the mother of Essex, the persistent and indefatigable Countess of Leicester. Though she was now married to Sir Christopher Blount, she remained Countess of Leicester. After marriage with the favourite, Elizabeth had never received her. But unlike the Countess of Essex, the Countess of Leicester never gave up. The Queen might ignore the former successfully, but Essex's mother would not be banished; she beseiged the Queen in season and out of season. The instrument of her ambition was her influential offspring. Lady Leicester gave her son no peace. The harassed young man strove and strove to bring about a meeting; and again and again the queen consented to his importunity, but failed to keep the appointment when the moment came. One day the Countess of Leicester would be awaiting her at the end of the tilt-yard with a costly jewel ready for presentation, and Elizabeth would not come. Another day the Countess would expect her at a great dinner attended by all the world, and Elizabeth would find some unexpected reason for staying at home. "My Lord of Essex, that had kept his chamber all the day before in his night-gown, went up to the Queen the privy way; but all would not prevail," says the chronicler of the Trojan strife.

However, the day came at last when Elizabeth

succumbed. The meeting took place in her own presence-chamber. The Countess embraced and kissed the Queen, and the Queen returned her embrace and kissed her. It was over. Elizabeth could breathe again and give her attention to Essex. She beamed upon her favourite and the young Lord preened himself in the sunshine of restored peace. Then, plump into the midst of the blissful interlude, fell fresh tidings from his mother. She wished to come to court again and kiss the Queen's hand.

V

In the summer of 1598 Elizabeth had the Irish rebellion to deal with. Encouraged by King Philip, Ireland had boiled up again. Elizabeth had spent three hundred thousand pounds in one year to put the country in order, but in spite of all the cost it was as far from order as ever. Where was she to get more funds? The harvest of Spanish treasure-ships was past. A bell and a bishop's library did not help her to equip soldiers. She was hectic and irritable.

The council meetings turned into wrangles. No one knew what to do with the Irish problem, or whom to send there to untangle it. Around the council table two parties grew up — the one headed by old Lord Burghley and his son, and the other by Lord Essex. Whatever was proposed by one faction was negated by the other, and vice versa. The contest at last cen-

tred in the appointment of a Lord Deputy. Essex, with his usual indecisiveness, was slow with candidates, but asserted himself actively by opposing the suggestions of the others. Everyone was desperate. The aged Lord Burghley, trembling with anger, pointed to a passage in the fifty-fifth Psalm: "Bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days." Essex read it and said nothing. The Queen was beside herself. She flared up at her favourite. It was too much for Essex. He shrugged his shoulders and turned his back on her, the Queen of England.

Quick as a flash she raised her hand and boxed his ears. "Go to the devil," she said. Quite as if she had been a man, the offended nobleman laid his hand on his sword-hilt. Howard came up and spoke to him, remonstrating, and Essex dropped his hand. Elizabeth said nothing. Then, instead of apologizing, Essex blustered. He would not have endured such an insult, he said, from old King Henry the Eighth himself. Still enraged, he left the court and hid himself at Wanstead.

In the ominous silence which now spread itself around the favourite, one voice alone is heard. It is that of the Countess of Leicester. "Sweet Robin," she wrote to Essex. "Yourself hath given me such taste of some strange matter to be looked for, so I cannot be quiet till I know the true cause of your absence and discontentment. If it be but for Ireland, I doubt not but you are wise and politic enough to

countermine with your enemies, whose devilish practices can no way hurt you but one. Wherefore, my dear son, give me leave to be a little jealous over you for your good, and entreat you to have ever God and your own honour before your eyes; so shall you be sure that he will dispose indeed all, as you say, for the best, in spite of all enemies. . . . Well, if it be men's matters, I know you have courage enough; if women's, you have meetly well passed the pikes already and therein should be skilful. So, praying you not to be too secret from your best friends, I end, beseeching the Almighty to bless you . . . while I am, Your mother, dearliest loving you, L. Leicester."

Before the end of the year it was announced that Essex himself would go to Ireland as Lord Deputy. In desperation he had at last suggested himself for the post; and the Queen, with thoughts whose character can only be guessed at to this day, accepted his suggestion. Crestfallen and full of anxious qualms, Essex prepared to go. New Year's and Twelfth Night, with their celebrations, brought a brief respite, but soon all was in train again and he set forth at the end of March. The people cheered their hero as he rode through the streets, but his enemies, headed by Robert Cecil, looked on with watchful eyes. Ireland was already the graveyard of reputations.

He was going to Ulster, the sore spot of the country. His task was to march on Tyrone, the centre of

disaffection, and to capture Shan O'Neil, the ringleader of the disaffected. On this difficult almost impossible errand the Queen had sent her favourites. She could not have been unaware that the chances were against him. The Earl of Tyrone, Shan O'Neil, was well known to her as one of the most incorrigible and crafty of men. He had once been to London and she had seen and talked with him. He was a formidable chieftain, a consummate cheat and a prime diplomat. Elizabeth and all her council had not been able to get the better of his "O'Neil-ship," as the Queen called his effrontery. Yet the weak and hesitant Essex was obliged to meet and deal with him in his own territory. Elizabeth may have seen in this the one desperate chance for Essex, and, as such, offered it.

But if she had any forlorn hopes, they soon vanished. The Earl did not go to Ulster. He found an excuse for proceeding southward first and spent the spring in marching through the counties below Dublin. "I give the Lord Deputy a thousand pounds to go on progress," she said furiously. She seized her pen. "You do not inform us when you intend to proceed to the northern action," she wrote. "Much time and excessive charges have been spent to little purpose. Your two months' journey hath brought us never a capital rebel, against whom it had been worthy to have adventured one thousand men; for . . . full well do we know that you would long since

have scorned to have allowed it for any great matter in others to have taken an Irish hold from a rabble of rogues with such force as you had and with the help of the cannon. . . . Tyrone has been pleased to see our army employed against these base rogues. . . . In order to plant garrisons in the north and assail that proud rebel, we command you to pass thither with all speed. . . ."

At last word came that Essex had gone northward; and then, almost before she could draw a long breath of relief, followed the startling news that the campaign was over. Essex and Tyrone had come to an agreement. They had met on horseback, at a ford; and, with the ford still flowing between them, they had established a truce. Tyrone had not crossed the water, but he had remained uncovered during the interview, and Essex, in his report, dwelt on that circumstance and on Tyrone's oath. "To trust this traitor upon oath," wrote Elizabeth, in reply, "is to trust a devil upon his religion." She ordered the Lord Deputy to resume negotiations and under no circumstances to promise a pardon to Tyrone. But Essex had already promised. He had already passed his word.

He was in a desperate quandary. Between the irate Queen and the crafty Irish chieftain, there was little at the moment to choose. He realized, now that it was too late, that his only resource was to write letters, which his enemies, snugly ensconced under the same roof as the Queen, could interpret at their pleasure.

To renew the attack on Tyrone was, for his pride, impossible. His position was one of anguish.

But, after all, why should he take the Queen at her word? She was so changeable. Had not his sister's husband been heinously reprimanded one day and overpraised the next? "So now she is ready to bepiss herself," his brother-in-law had said, "for fear of the Spaniards. I am again one of her white boys." Why should Essex bow to a character of this shifting sort? He knew that Elizabeth had always allowed certain men to do as they liked as long as they took their chances. He knew that Leicester had come home from Flanders without leave and had been forgiven. He believed that if he too could throw himself at Elizabeth's feet she would understand and forgive him. At least he could explain himself as he never could through letters.

Essex crossed England on horseback in three days. The court was at Nonsuch — ten miles more to ride after he had reached London. Dishevelled, exhausted, plaintive, he sprang from his saddle and burst in upon the Queen. It was ten o'clock in the morning. Elizabeth had just risen and had not even put on her wig. But, strange to say, she did not send Essex away at once. She was too happy to see him and she let him stay.

VI

Slowly, but surely, her attitude changed. Accusations flowed in against him. Among others it was afterwards made an offence that he had burst into her bedroom unannounced. Once when the courtiers had tried to take Leicester to task for a similar, though, to be sure, a less obstreperous, intrusion, Elizabeth had not allowed it. But now she saw belatedly that Essex had affronted her. More and more, as the stories of his political crimes in Ireland accumulated, she saw a personal injury in his impetuous intrusion. Essex had conferred knighthood like a king; he had disobeyed his sovereign's orders; he had fraternized with the Irish rebel. The crafty Tyrone had wound the Earl of Essex around his little finger. The Queen ordered her favourite to keep to his house. But she said: "Whatever I do shall be for his chastisement, not for his destruction."

Solitary and deserted by all but his worst advisers, Essex moped and brooded. His sister, his mother, and his devoted secretary could see no side but his. It was one of the results of his semi-imprisonment that he became more amenable to these close sympathizers. Stubborn and despairing, he nevertheless gathered himself together at times and wrote humbly to the Queen. Once when he was ill she came to see him. But the impasse was not broken. His rivals lurked and lowered in the corners of the court, but all of them to-

gether were not so dangerous as that little family body-guard which now rallied to his side. His sister had followed faithfully in her mother's footsteps by marrying the Queen's young favourite, Sir Charles Blount. Essex's female relatives seemed possessed to annoy Elizabeth. By their fond and foolish guidance he was led to make rash utterances. The Queen was "an old woman, crooked both in body and mind," he said. The words were said in public and were carried to Elizabeth. It seems a strange thing for him to have said, for her figure was as straight as a die to the end of her life. Was he perchance aiming at his enemy Sir Robert Cecil?

Essex had financial worries in addition to his other serious troubles. He had never been provident and his principal resource at this time was the monopoly of wines, which, as England grew no grapes, was a rich property. In the fall of 1600, its renewal fell due. Just previous to his petition for this grant, Essex had sent the Queen "some dutiful letters," as she said, and they had raised her hopes of a reconciliation. She had forgotten the monopoly, as perhaps even Essex may have done, but when his petition reminded her she waxed suddenly bitter about these letters. "After taking them to flow from the abundance of his heart, I find them but a preparation to a suit for renewing his farm of sweet wines," she said. And she declined outright to grant his petition.

It was the last straw for Essex. Like a crazed goat

on a tether, he further and further entangled himself. He allied himself with James the Sixth and also with the underground Puritan party. There were certain Puritan meetings which he attended, hostile to the crown. There was a play which showed the abdication of an English king and which was dedicated to Essex. It was produced in the streets. There was, finally, a conspiracy and a fierce uprising of men in the city, led by Essex himself. The rebellion was stamped out almost as soon as started, and the unhappy leader, tragic scapegoat, was dragged to the Tower.

Essex was tried for treason on the 19th of February 1601. Lord Buckhurst, with whom he had competed for the chancellorship of Oxford, presided over the hearing. As Captain of the Queen's Guard, Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he had driven away from court, was present. Francis Bacon, his former friend, appeared as his prosecutor. Sir Robert Cecil stayed in the background until an accusation of Essex's brought his stunted figure suddenly forward. "The difference between you and me," he said, "is great; so I speak in the person of an honest man, and you, my Lord, in the person of a traitor; for well I know you have it at will. The preëminence hath been yours, but I have innocence, truth of conscience, and honesty to defend me against the scandal of slanderous tongues and aspiring hearts; and I protest before God, I have loved your person, and justified your virtues; and I appeal

to God and the Queen, that I told Her Majesty, your afflictions would make you a fit servant for her."

"Ah, Mr. Secretary," said Essex, "I thank God for my humbling, that you in the ruff of your bravery came to make your oration against me this day."

Queen Elizabeth was at Whitehall. She had come to use a cane in ascending the long stairs. Her only companion was Lord Buckhurst, the man who had once set out to be a poet, but had turned politician, and who was now presiding over Essex's trial. The court found the accused guilty of high treason and condemned him to death. The Queen signed his death-warrant instantly.

During the five days which intervened before his execution, only one quiver of relenting escaped from her. Immured in her lonely chamber, with the initials of Anne Boleyn and King Henry staring spectrally, what must her thoughts have been! What memories must have trooped through her agonized brain! What reveries! What ghosts from the past must have risen up to torture her! Horrible visions of the scaffold where her mother and Lord Seymour and the Duke of Norfolk had been struck down like dumb brutes in the prime of life and hopefulness must have haunted her days and nights. Doubts more horrible than ghosts must have stalked her solitude. Did Lord Seymour, who had died for her, really love her when he held her in his arms? Or had he, as well as Essex, only trifled and flattered? Was it true that, as Mary Stuart and

Lady Shrewsbury had said, she was not as other women and had never been so? Was it possible that she was now old and repulsive, in mind as well as body, and that even her companionship with Essex had been an illusion?

For three days she remained as if paralysed and then a secret stealthy message went forth to the Tower. The execution of Essex was stayed. But he gave no answering sign. No appeal for forgiveness came from him. And presently a second message went forth to the Tower, this time swift and inexorable. The execution was to proceed. Elizabeth and Essex had allowed too many barriers to rise up between them. They would never again be able, either of them, to reach out and touch the other.

"They say," said the Fugger news-correspondent, "that the executioner who carried out the sentence on Lord Essex with the ax was frightened to such an extent that he first of all slashed the Earl through the shoulder, then through the head, and lastly through the neck and this in most grisly fashion. Great sorrow has been excited thereby not only in England, but also in Holland and Zeeland, among the common people, for the said Earl was greatly devoted and attached to his religion."

Chapter XII

THE LAST OF THE TUDORS

I

Queen Elizabeth was an old woman although her portraits, which grew more numerous in later years, continued to conceal the fact. In appearance she resembled her grandfather Henry the Seventh. She had the same aquiline nose, perhaps more exaggerated, and a similar enlargement, though probably of a different origin, protruding from her throat. The high forehead and long chin which she inherited from her mother gave her face unusual length and the hollow cheeks of old age — she had lost most of her teeth — increased the hatchety effect. She could not bear the sight of her own profile and ordered the coin-maker to destroy a die which too faithfully revealed it.

Her face was dry and wrinkled but her bosom, which she uncovered rather too freely — perhaps for this reason — was fair and smooth. In her eyes and her bearing she preserved her youthful looks, and all observers testify that her expression was pleasant to the last. Between an elaborately curled red wig and an enormous lace ruff her wrinkled countenance looked out with the same fire as ever. She spoke with the same wit and forcefulness even if, in her more voluble

moments, the words fell indistinguishably through her broken, discoloured teeth. The story of her dislike for mirrors is probably true, though in her younger days she had been ready enough to preen herself in Dr. Dee's convex glass. But the anecdote about her ladies' rouging her nose without her knowledge is hardly credible. No one would have dared to play such a trick on Queen Elizabeth.

Elizabeth had outlived all of her contemporaries. Philip of Spain, Catherine de Medici, Burghley, Leicester, Hunsdon — all of them were dead. Still she was not regarded as an old woman as long as Essex lived. He was the tie which bound her, inwardly and outwardly, to the younger generation. His death left her suddenly stranded on the desert shores of old age. Her gay environment began to crumble and the crowd to fall away. All marvelled at her longevity and James of Scotland grumbled. Would she "continue as long as sun or moon?" he said.

And yet such was the force of long-established habit that Elizabeth and her courtiers began, after the death of Essex, to look around for another favourite. The supply was, alas, no longer plentiful. Lord Buckhurst was, for some reason, like Lord Burghley, a servant who was valuable to the State, but not eligible for courtship. He was useful in many ways, but not as an admirer. Sir Charles Blount had gone to Ireland, whence he wrote perfunctory love-letters which showed that his heart was not Elizabeth's, but was

really centred in the Irish campaign. His military reports were, on the other hand, highly satisfactory, for he made a better general than sighing lover. Sir Walter Raleigh was faithful to his marriage. The Earl of Clanricarde, who was Frances Walsingham's third husband, was automatically put forward by the Puritan party as candidate for favourite. But the Queen only wept at the sight of him, for he bore a resemblance to the dead Essex, and sent him away. She grew all the while more deeply melancholy, until finally Sir Robert Cecil, her young but handicapped Secretary, stepped into the breach. Deep in the heart of the deformed Cecil lurked an incurable jealousy of the accomplished Essex. It had begun back in their Cambridge days and it continued to gnaw at him after his rival was dead. Surely he felt a great thrill of triumph when the Queen brightened at his courtly addresses and half-jocosely accepted him as her favourite.

Thus there began between them that incongruous relationship. The broken old woman, denying her infirmities, and the unhappy Cecil, denying his handicap, had no real respect for each other. Yet they essayed to play the game of mutual courtship and even achieved a kind of success in their rôles. They flirted and wrote verses in the conventional fashion of the time until faint currents of emotion started to circulate. Their pretended feelings took on a semblance of warmth. They quarrelled and made up, sulked and

smiled again, until the simulated love-affair was almost a sincere one. For the first time in her reign Elizabeth had allowed the offices of favourite and chief councillor to be combined in one person. She was no longer strong enough to drive her accustomed team of good looks and intelligence. She had fallen back at last on intelligence alone. Sir Robert Cecil was in sole and complete control.

But this was not the last drop of bitterness in the cup of her old age. Hardest of all to bear was the changed attitude of the people, for there is no doubt that it had changed. Elizabeth was English and, as has been often said of her, she was wedded to the nation. It was her one true marriage. Up to the day of Essex's death the people had never failed her, but now her popularity was obviously waning. To pass through silent streets which had formerly resounded at her approach must have been anguish to one of her temperament. It certainly seemed as if the people had been on the side of Essex.

One episode which followed tended to prove that. The monopoly of sweet wines which she had taken from him had reverted as a matter of course to the crown. But the privilege remained there only until Elizabeth opened her last Parliament, which was in the autumn following the Earl's death. Instead of granting funds for war with Ireland, as was expected of them, the Commons first demanded a reform. They asked for the abolition of monopolies — naturally in-

cluding that of sweet wines — before they would consent to grant the money needed for the Irish war. Appalled, Elizabeth hastened to forestall them. Before the matter could be brought up for a vote, she abolished all monopolies with a sweep of her pen, calling the holders of them "harpies and horse-leeches" and forgetting in her excitement that she was one herself. "The splendour of regal majesty hath not so blinded mine eyes," she assured the commoners, "that licentious power should prevail with me more than justice." This was a different tone from that of her famous message on liberty of speech delivered a few years previously. "Liberty of speech," she had then told the house, "is to say Aye or No to bills." It was no longer the same Elizabeth who now hastened almost breathlessly to justify herself to them. "The glory of the name of a king may deceive those princes that know not how to rule," she said, "as gilded pills may deceive a sick patient." The simile showed what was on her mind.

Poignant remembrances of the last days of her sister rose to torment her. It was impossible for her not to see a repetition of those circumstances in her own case as she saw the turning of all eyes toward James. Even her faithful Robert Carey and her godson Harington, not to speak of the Secretary, were in correspondence with him. She had read history and she knew, as she said, the "ambition of kingdoms" — "what cockings hath been between the father and the

son for the same." She had substantially acknowledged James long since as her heir, but now she pretended that she had no heir and that an heir was irrelevant. Her councillors did the same, hypocritically concealing their connexions with James. The Queen, suffering inwardly, only spoke her feelings to a contemporary, Henry of Navarre, now King of France. "All the fabric of my reign," she wrote to her confidant, "little by little, is beginning to fail."

II

Elizabeth did not survive the death of Essex. The valiant organism which had rallied from so many dreadful shocks could not rally from this latest one. Her frail but tenacious hold on life was radically loosened. She could not forget her lover. Alternately she upbraided him and bewailed his memory. "I warned him more than two years before his execution," she told the French envoy, "that . . . he should be careful not to touch my sceptre . . ." and Henry sent her the reassurance through a messenger that he thought her course unavoidable. But try as she would, she could not forget her action. Through the long summer twilights and the early darkness of autumn she would sit alone, brooding and grieving. She would forget herself in the presence of others and fall to sighing and weeping. Occasionally she would break forth into fierce invectives against Essex and



QUEEN ELIZABETH: DEATH-MASK. From the reproduction in the New York *Times*



his treachery and then she would speak forgivingly of him. "I know Essex committed a great crime," she said, in ordering his banner to be hung at Windsor, "but, for the sake of his son, I cannot forget the services he has rendered the crown." But such moments of calm magnanimity were rare. She soon relapsed into grief and self-torture.

Notwithstanding, she continued to live as blithely as ever with the courtiers which still clung to her and followed her lead. Her progresses and horseback-rides went on in the accustomed fashion, as if to circumvent a prophecy that Elizabeth would die in her bed. She spent the spring at Richmond, the summer at country-houses, and the autumn at Whitehall. There was the usual music and dancing in which the Queen took part, sometimes footing it through the *galliard,* sometimes directing and criticizing the maidens from her throne. Plaintive Irish melodies, brought home by the soldiers, were popular that winter, and English country dances were revived, to the Queen's great pleasure, for she liked national customs. An English play was produced before her, but did not make much impression. Perhaps Elizabeth thought that plays were pieces to be read or translated, and for sheer entertainment she preferred tilting or bear-baiting. She was too old to assist at this Titan birth and the presence-chamber was too narrow for such a popular offspring. The players withdrew to the more congenial hurly-burly of the great city, and the Queen never realized the

phenomenon that had appeared before her. More and more she sat in her chair, patting her foot to the measures while the others danced and listening to music which others played for her. "In winter, 'Lullaby,' an old song of Mr. Bird's, will be more in request, I think," wrote one of her courtiers.

The Queen had taken a severe cold. She had already been suffering for some time from rheumatism in her arm and from a jaundiced condition which showed itself in the whites of her eyes. Such medicines as were given in those days she refused to take. She refused to admit her ailments. But at last she sickened visibly, lost sleep and appetite; and everyone could plainly see that she was ill. Something had chilled her courage. It was probably the first attack of the delirium which grew upon her until she finally confessed it to Lady Scrope. Visions of her own body, "exceedingly lean and fearful, in a light of fire," continued to haunt her nights until she was afraid to go to bed. She decided to remove to Richmond, which she called "a warm winter-box to shelter her old age." It was an admission that she was old.

On a wet stormy January day she entered the old brick castle, the cradle of the self-made Tudors, the place where she, the last of them, was about to end her days. At first the beneficent atmosphere seemed to revive her; but at the end of a month she fell ill again, or, rather, she passed into a state of extreme dejection from which it was impossible to rouse her.

The change was sudden. It followed immediately upon a visit she had paid to the death-bed of one of her ladies, the Countess of Nottingham, who had died at the end of February. She had either sent for Elizabeth at the last moment or else the Queen, who was faithful in such matters, had gone to her in the course of duty. What passed between the two women is only a matter of conjecture; but there were signs on the part of Elizabeth that something of tragic import had taken place. Her excessive grief could not otherwise be accounted for, as the Countess had not been one of her intimate friends. The supposed explanation has become a legend which persists to this day.

Essex, as the dying woman is said to have told Elizabeth, had tried in his last hours to reach her with an appeal for mercy. He had sent her a small green cameo ring which she had once given to him as a token of affection. But the pathetic emblem fell into the hands of the Countess, who now lay dying, and never reached Elizabeth. It had been intended for Lady Scrope, her sister, the partisan of Essex, but had reached her by mistake. Whether the Countess of Nottingham was jealous of her sister's place so near the Queen, or whether she acted merely as a dutiful wife, the story does not say. But she gave the ring to her husband, Lord Charles Howard, and allowed events to take their course. At this point, says the legend, the Queen shook the dying woman in her bed, which she probably did if the rest of the story is true.



It is in keeping with the character of Essex to have used a romantic medium instead of a direct appeal even when his life was at stake, and to have failed through tragic misjudgment in his purpose.

The part of the story which is not borne out by the accompanying circumstances is the betrayal of the Lord of Essex by Lord Howard. The act is inconsistent with Howard's generous character. If he withheld the ring from Queen Elizabeth, he probably did it under orders from the Privy Council, for he was obedient to his superiors. And if such orders were given at all, they could have originated only in the Privy Council, which at that time was dominated by a single clever statesman. The statesman was Sir Robert Cecil. It was Cecil if anyone who had overreached the Queen and destroyed her favourite.

During her last illness, which dates from this fatal visit, the Queen turned against her Secretary. The burlesque between them was ended. In the last stages of her sickness, which meant for one of Elizabeth's character a superhuman struggle, Cecil had no influence upon her. She refused absolutely to go to bed. But the inexorable enemy forced her at last upon her knees and then down upon her cushions, where she remained sitting for four days. She would not even lie down then. "You *must* go to bed," said Robert Cecil, "to content the people." "Little man, little man," said the emaciated Elizabeth, giving expression at last to her contempt for his figure, "if your father

had lived, ye durst not have said so much, but ye know I must die, and that makes ye so presumptuous."

It was finally Lord Charles Howard who persuaded her to bow to the inevitable. To him she confided that she was in desperate extremities. "My Lord," she whispered hoarsely, when all the others had left the room, "I am tied with a chain of iron about my neck. I am tied, I am tied, and the case is altered with me." But after they had at last got her into bed, some of her old truculence returned. It came out, whimsically enough, in her last hour.

The Queen lay prone upon her couch, speechless, cadaverous. All the life that was left in her was centred in one long, still beautiful hand which hung down at the side of her bed and which still made signs to express her wishes. The Archbishop of Canterbury had been summoned to pray for the dying woman, which he did with unction and enthusiasm. He then rose — he was an old man and his knees were weary — and turned to go. But Elizabeth signalled with her hand that he was to continue. Again he fell upon his knees and went on praying for another half-hour. He then tried to bring his prayer to a close. But Elizabeth, with her hand, again forbade him. Exhausted, the old man drew a deep breath and resumed his petition, this time praying with such fervour that his voice roared out and filled the room. It was presumably the last sound that entered the Queen's consciousness. When the

Archbishop rose again, the hand was inert and lifeless. It had expressed for its owner her last command.

This is our last glimpse of Elizabeth. A few hours later the breath left her body. At three o'clock in the morning of March 24th, 1603 her body was pronounced to be lifeless. It was prepared for burial by her ladies and was not dissected and embalmed as was the rigorous custom in those days for sovereigns. Either Elizabeth had forbidden it or her ladies forbade it on her behalf. The leaden mask and the waxen effigy were prepared under the direction of the same courtier who had prophesied the "Lullaby," but no man's hand touched the body of Elizabeth after it was dead. She went to her grave with her secret inviolate.

III

Elizabeth remains to this day one of the mysteries of history. Her character has been praised and blamed, exalted and abused, glorified and vilified, but it has never been explained. To attempt it is perhaps, as Froude says, to attempt the impossible, since everyone of us is, after all, "a perplexity to himself and a perplexity to his neighbours." But many writers, including Froude, have attempted the impossible in the case of Elizabeth. No one has been more dogmatically described than this elusive, complex woman. The broadest and most unqualified statements have been made about her. She was stingy; she was untruthful;

a chronic invalid; a virgin. Yet all of the statements have been questioned and certainly need to be qualified. The problem of Elizabeth's character refuses to be explained away in any set of absolute terms. After all that has been said about her, her disposition still confronts us, challenging posterity for an unbiased, reasonable judgment.

As vague objects sometimes take on definition when seen in relation to other things, Elizabeth takes on character in relation to her ancestors. She was the granddaughter of two English merchants, Sir Geoffrey Boleyn and Henry the Seventh. They were both, though on a different scale, pioneers, self-made men, founders of great families, conquerors of material things. In a single lifetime they amassed great fortunes — Henry the Seventh left an estate of eighteen million pounds — and aggrandized the name which they left their families. We know little of Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, but Henry the Seventh was extremely proud of having done it all himself. He was a true bourgeois, one of the first and greatest exemplars of this modern type.

That he felt the bastard stain on his name is shown by the amount of imagination that he expended on his British descent. He insisted that he came down in a direct line from King Arthur of the Round Table. He kept the low name of Tudor, it is true, but he strove in other ways to forget the admixture of vulgar blood which flowed in him and probably contributed

in no small measure to his ability. His granddaughter Elizabeth was similarly marked. The shadow of illegitimacy which rested on her early life was never entirely lifted, and the merchant Boleyn's blood was an added embarrassment. She boasted of her father, Henry the Eighth, and compared herself proudly to him, but she never mentioned her mother's name. "I may not be a lioness, but I am a lion's cub," she said. If she suspected in any way an innate dignity in Anne Boleyn's character, she never uttered her suspicion. That poor lady had left too many guilty consciences behind her to be spoken of with fairness. The story of her heroic, unwomanlike ambition has never been related. Her rise and fall was in its way a match for the great Wolsey's. She was a fit forerunner of her celebrated daughter. Anne Boleyn aspired passionately to be Queen of England, and through some hereditary channel she transmitted her aspiration to Elizabeth, the daughter who so magnificently fulfilled it. Elizabeth retained her mother's badge as Princess and used it as Queen — a slight but eloquent tribute in the midst of her silence.

Like Henry the Eighth, her father, Elizabeth liked show, display, magnificence. But she was not, like him, a spendthrift; she was a hoarder like her grandfather. She loved great enterprise, high action, bold endeavour, but she hated to spend money on such things. The bookkeeping which she had practised in

her youth had taught her to count the cost in pounds and shillings, and so she alternated between prudence and daring, between meanness and heroism. She lived grandly like her father and scrimped like her grandfather. She tried to unite the qualities of a spender and a miser and, strangely enough, she almost succeeded. It made her a paradoxical and complicated character. To have been consistently the one thing or the other would have made her more explicable, more human, and more likable.

Elizabeth inherited her sociability from both of her parents. Henry had charm and graciousness, and Anne Boleyn was sparkling. Anne's reputation for sprightliness could hardly have been acquired by an unsocial nature. Her talent for repartee must have been something like her daughter's penchant for riddles. One suspects a lack of warmth in Anne's social intercourse, as there was in Queen Elizabeth's love-affairs; but the latter made up for the lack in her companionable manners and her gift for friendship. Farther than this she could not go. Some secret fear rose in her heart and chilled its mounting warmth in the early stages. Affable but not affectionate, susceptible but not passionate, she was never to realize in her whole life the full meaning of love.

Elizabeth had boundless pride. Her favourite reference to herself was "Prince," and she acknowledged no obligations other than those of that station. "As there can be no duer debt than Prince's word," she

would begin proudly, although the promise which followed was not always to be trusted. She loved to dwell in memory on the period of her accession to the throne, and on those rare occasions when she had a patient listener she would abandon herself completely to these reminiscences, "telling them so minutely," wrote Philip's Ambassador, "that I will not tire your Majesty by repeating them." Her throne, her extensive wardrobe, her playing on the virginals, her dancing, were all sops to her vanity, and the outward measure of an abysmal dissatisfaction with herself. She piled her tiara higher, added another inch to her ruff, reaped more triumphs in diplomacy, to satisfy her pride. But she never, not even in Leicester and Essex, wholly fulfilled her need of love. She exacted the forms of devotion, but she avoided the profound fact. In all this she was not far removed from that long-dead pair who had mated against such terrible odds to produce Elizabeth. Her father and her mother were not the libertine and light-o'-love which popular legend has made of them. Elizabeth's coldness was in part a legacy from them.

Elizabeth had preëminently brains. This was only to be expected, for brains were in her family on both sides. Ability was her inheritance, her destiny. She had the virtues and the faults of over-charged intelligence. Her lack of general simplicity, her fondness for conceits and allegories, her fantastic literary style, and even her tendency to prevaricate were, in a sense,

arts and practices which she could not have followed by any other means. She was fated to be clever and lived up to her fate.

She was artificial for the reason that neither her nature nor her circumstances permitted her to be natural. Except for those rare instants when sincerity broke through like a sudden geyser, she kept her thoughts well concealed even from herself. In 1597, when Spain was pressing her hard, she composed a special prayer for aid. From the point of view of language it was one of her most extraordinary productions. In stiff, disjointed periods which must have taxed even the Deity to understand, she urged Him to smite the enemy, until at last a single phrase relieved the obscurity and revealed her mind: "a fact alone for Thee only to perform," she told the Godhead squarely and then returned straightway to her usual stilted form.

Her diplomacy was like her prayers, involved and tortuous. No politician of her time, including Catherine de Medici, could compare with her in the art of double-dealing. The strain of her method was nerve-racking and would have been intolerable for anyone but one with her amazing endurance. She walked through life, as it were, on a tight-rope. She took risks that seemed staggering to the ordinary observer. She told lies without being in the least a liar; she deserted her adherents without sacrificing their loyalty; she played favourites against each other with the

utmost shamelessness and yet she had a fine sense of justice. All her life long she was honoured by the most antagonistic factions, and at her death she was mourned by them together. Until the very end of her life she preserved her genius for maintaining a precarious footing between opposites and when she at last lost this genius, she perished herself.

Elizabeth was not one who, at any age or by any standards, could be called a womanly woman. She was too masculine for that. Her sexual and emotional disposition is a great enigma, and the reason for the enigma is that she combined too well the qualities of both sexes. To the end of her life she could never decide which of her characters she preferred. She relished her perquisites as a woman and enjoyed those of men which she had usurped. "I will not suffer the King of Spain or Guise," she said, "to mock this poor old woman, who, in my female form, carries the heart of a man." In the same breath she would cling, womanlike, to chivalry and would threaten with male aggressiveness. She carried coyness and coquettishness to an unnatural extreme, yet all the men who attracted her were dependent on her bounty and her domination. She flirted like a schoolgirl almost to her death-bed swore like a swaggering stripling to the verge of her grave.

Elizabeth not only often thought and spoke of herself as a man, but not rarely acted as if she were really one. Even her elaborate dressing was more like Leices-

ter's and Henry the Eighth's than it was like Katharine Parr's. She chose to be represented by a man as proxy at the baptism of a French princess. Her jokes were freer than was customary for her sex in those days and she competed, one assumes, very favourably with the men. During her last illness she kept a sword lying on her bed and in her delirium laid about her wildly, stabbing through the arras. Her obvious masculinity strove steadily with the feminine part of her disposition, and the two tendencies were so well matched that they seemed to neutralize each other. Some modern authorities have asserted that Elizabeth had no sexual impulse at all, as older historians used to declare that she was sterile. In effect both statements are true. Her emotional springs ran off in waste or else were lost in devious and untraceable channels. Her visible life, in its psychological aspects, gives evidence only of virginity; yet whether Elizabeth was a maid or not remains, as someone wisely said, "inscrutable to intelligence." Practically she was virginal, devoid of sexual impulse, and sterile, as far as flesh-and-blood progeny was concerned. If any passing experience happened to the contrary it bore no visible fruit in her attitude towards sexual love and child-bearing.

It was in her character as Queen, as administrator, that Elizabeth realized her great creativeness. In this field she demonstrated abundant fertility. Whatever her springs of action were in that special domain they

flowed freely and incessantly. It was here also that she maintained her stability. "There was no respite," one author has said, "from her birth and position." Elizabeth asked for no respite. Through all her wavering and inconstancy, her hesitation and uncertainty, there was one faithful element — her sense of responsibility to her position. She never once lost sight of that for at least fifty years. The constant burden must have used up a Titanic fund of energy. Wherever the thin, unbeautiful, lone woman found the sources for it is a mystery. It remains one of the miracles of human character.

We know, however, that she lived in a great age and drew something from her age. The hour itself was creative and she yielded to the hour. The time was fecund and she was its creature. She was English and belonged to the people. Her family had swept out the Pope, cut off France, defeated Spain; and Queen Elizabeth was the climax of all that struggling and striving. Her last connexion with the foreign world — the Europe of the continent — had been cast off. She was alone on her island, and the people were alone with her. They were sure of each other. Small wonder that they criticized her like a daughter, though she cropped their ears and tongues for it! Small wonder that she bullied them unmercifully and they called her "good Queen Bess!" The country mourned her like an orphan when she died. Her reign was a marriage, and the nation was her child.

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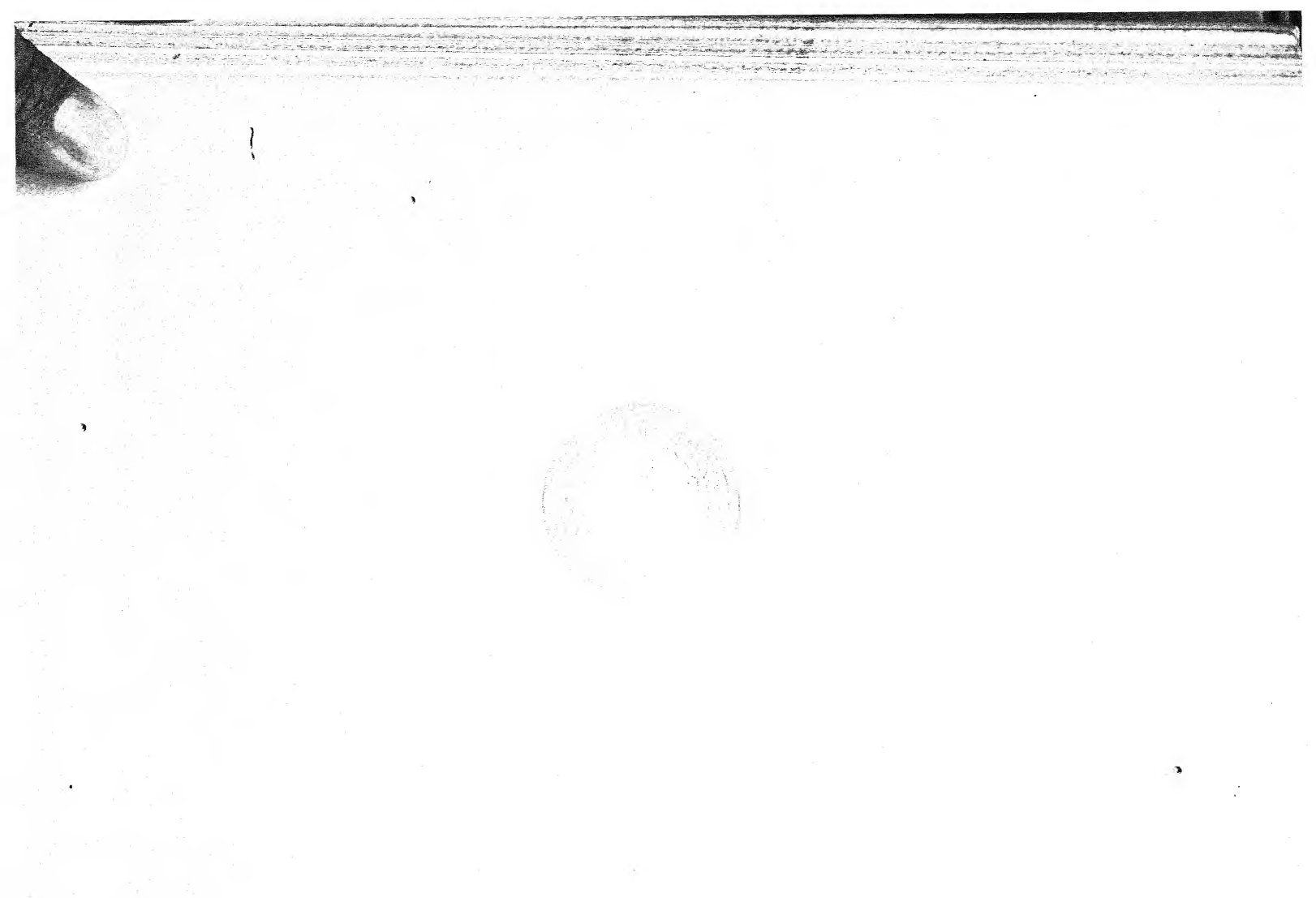
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When KATHARINE ANTHONY was nineteen she sold her first literary effort, a criticism of Poe's poetry, for five dollars, but "the check never came." Since then she has gone far in the literary world. She began by publishing books on such sociological subjects as *Mothers Who Must Earn, Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia,* and *Labor Laws of New York*. All of these rank high in scholarliness and are, moreover, notable for the human understanding and distinguished style which contributed so largely to her success when she turned to biography. In 1920 *Margaret Fuller — A Psychological Biography* appeared under another imprint to be taken over later by Mr. Knopf. In 1925 her *Catherine the Great* proved her to be one of the most trenchant, amusing, and well-informed of biographers — a statement which few readers of this book on Elizabeth will question.



Set on the Linotype in Caslon,
Electrotyped, Printed and Bound
by The Plimpton Press, Norwood, Mass.
Paper made by Ticonderoga Pulp & Paper Co.,
Ticonderoga, N. Y.